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THE

POPULAR EDITION.

THE SELECTED POEMS

OF

SIR WILLIAM JONES,

CONSISTING OF

THE ENCHANTED FRUIT OR THE HINDU WIFE;

AND

THE NINE HYMNS

TO

CAMDEO, DURGA, BHAVANI, INDRA, SURYA, LACSHMI, NARAYENA, SERESWATY and GANGA.

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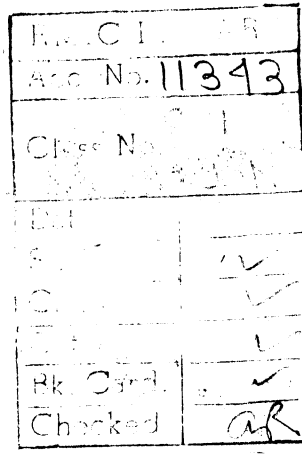
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THE ENCHANTED FRUIT.

OR,

THE HINDU WIFE.

'O LOVELY age [1], by *Brahmens* fam'd
Pure *Setye Yug* [2] in *Sanscrit* nam'd!
Delightful! Not for cups of *gold*,
Or wives *a thousand centuries* old;
Or men, degenerate now and small,
Then *one and twenty cubits* tall:
Not that plump *cows* full udders bore,
And bowls with *holy curd* [3] ran o'er;
Not that, by Deities defended
Fish, *Boar*, *Snake*, *Lion* [4], heav'n-descended,
Learn'd *Pendits*, now grown sticks and clods,
Redde fast the *Nagry of the Gods* [5]
And laymen, faithful to *Narayn* [6]
Believ'd in *Brahmas* mystic strain [7]

1. A parody on the Ode in *Tasso's Aminta*, beginning, *O bella eta dell' oro!*
2. The *Golden Age* of the *Hindus*.
3. Called *Joghrat*, the food of CRISHNA in his infancy and youth.
4. The four first *Avatars*, or *Incarnations* of the *Divine Spirit*.
5. The *Sanscrit*, or *Sengscrit*, is written in letters so named.
6. *Narayn* or *Narayan*, the *Spirit* of GOD.
7. The *Vayds*, or *Sacred Writings* of *Brahma*, called *Rig*, *Sam*, and *Yeiar*: doubts have been raised concerning the authority of the *fourth*, or *Atherven*, *Vayd*.

Not that all Subjects spoke plain truth,
While *Rajas* cherish'd old and youth,
No—yet delightful times! because
Nature then reign'd, and *Nature's Laws*;
When females of the softest kind
Were unaffected, unconfin'd;
And this grand rule from none was hidden [8];
WHAT PLEASETH, HATH NO LAW FORBIDDEN.'
Thus, with a lyre in *India* strung,
Aminta's poet would have sung;
And thus too, in a modest way,
All virtuous males will sing or say:
But swarthy nymphs of *Hindustan*
Look deeper than short-sighted man,
And thus, in some poetic chime,
Would speak with reason, as with rhyme:
'O lovelier age, by *Brahmens* fam'd,
Gay *Dwapar Yug* [9] in *Sanscrit* nam'd!
Delightful! though impure with *brass*
In many a green ill-scented mass;
Though husbands, but *sev'n* cubits high,
Must in *a thousand summers* die;
Though, in the lives of dwindled men,
Ten parts were Sin; Religion, *ten*;
Though *cows* would rarely fill the pail,
But made th' expected creambowl fail;

8. "Se piace, ei lice." *Tasso.*

9. The *Brazen Age*, or that in which Vice and Virtue were in *equal* proportion.

Though lazy *Pendits* ill could read
(No care of ours) their *Yejar Veid*;
Though *Rajas* look'd a little proud,
And *Ranies* rather spoke too loud;
Though *Gods*, display'd to mortal view
In mortal forms, were only *two*;
(Yet CRISHNA[10], sweetest youth, was one,
Crishna, whose cheeks outblaz'd the sun)
Delightful, ne'ertheless! because
Not bound by vile unnatural laws,
Which curse this age from *Caley*[11] nam'd,
By some base woman-hater fram'd.
Prepost'rous! that one biped vain
Should drag ten house-wives in his train,
And stuff them in a gaudy cage,
Slaves to weak lust or potent rage!
Not such the *Dwaper Yug*! oh then
ONE BUXOM DAME MIGHT WED FIVE MEN.'
True History, in solemn terms,
This Philosophic lore confirms;
For *India* once, as now cold *Tibet*[12],
A groupe unusual might exhibit,
Of sev'ral husbands, free from strife,
Link'd fairly to a single wife!
Thus Botanists, with eyes acute
To see prolific dust minute,

10. The *Apollo* of *India*.

11. The *Earthen Age*, or that of *Caley* or *Impurity*: this verse alludes to *Caley*, the *Hecate* of the *Indians*.

12. See the accounts published in the *Philosophical Transactions* from the papers of *Mr. Bogle*.

Taught by their learned northern *Brahmen* [13]
To class by *pistil* and by *stamen*,
Produce from nature's rich dominion
Flow'rs *Polyandrian Monogynian*,
Where embryon blossoms, fruits, and leaves
Twenty prepare, and ONE receives.
But, lest my word should nought avail,
Ye Fair to no unholy tale
Attend [14]. *Five thousand* years [15] ago,
As annals in *Benares* show,
When *Pandu* chiefs with *Curus* fought [16]
And each the throne imperial sought,
Five brothers of the regal line
Blaz'd high with qualities divine.
The first a prince without his peer,
Just, pious, lib'ral *Yudhishteir* [17];
Then *Erjun*, to the base a rod,
An Hero favour'd by a *God* [18]

13. *Linnæus.*

14. The story is told by the *Jesuit* BOUCHET, in his Letter to HUET, Bishop of *Avranches.*

15. A round number is chosen; but the *Caley Yug*, a little before which *Crishna* disappeared from this world, began *four thousand, eight hundred*, and *eighty-four* years ago, that is, according to our Chronologists, *seven hundred* and *forty-seven* before the flood; and by the calculation of *M. Bailly*, but *four hundred* and *fifty-four* after the foundation of the *Indian* empire.

16. This war, which *Crishna* fomented in favour of the *Pandu Prince, Yudhishteir*, supplied *Vya's* with the subject of his noble Epic Poem, *Mahabharat.*

17. This word is commonly pronounced with a strong accent on the last letter, but the preceding vowel is short in *Sengscrit.* The Prince is called on the Coast *Dherme Raj*, or Chief Magistrate.

18. The *Geita*, containing *Instructions* to *Erjun*, was composed by *Crishna* who peculiarly distinguished him.

Bheima, like mountain-leopard strong,
Unrival'd in th' embattled throng,
Bold *Nacul*, fir'd by noble shame
To emulate fraternal fame;
And *Sehdeo*, flush'd with manly grace,
Bright virtue dawning in his face:
To these a dame devoid of care,
Blythe *Draupady*, the debonair,
Renown'd for beauty, and for wit,
In wedlock's pleasing chain was knit[19].
It fortun'd, at an idle hour,
This five-mal'd single-femal'd flow'r
One balmy morn of fruitful May
Through vales and meadows took its way.
A low thatch'd mansion met their eye
In trees umbrageous bosom'd high;
Near it (no sight, young maids, for you)
A temple rose to *Mahadew*[20].
A thorny hedge and reedy gate
Enclos'd the garden's homely state;
Plain in its neatness: thither wend
The princes and their lovely friend.
Light-pinion'd gales, to charm the sense,
Their odoriferous breath dispense;

19. *Yudhisteir* and *Draupady*, called *Drobada* by *M. Sonnerat*, are deified on the Coast; and their feast, of which that writer exhibits an engraving, is named the *Procession of Fire*, because she passed *every year* from one of her *five* husbands to another, after a solemn purification by that element. In the *Bhasha* language, her name is written, DROPTY.

20. The *Indian* JUPITER.

From *Bela's*[21] pearl'd, or pointed, bloom,
And *Malty* rich, they steal perfume:
There honey-scented *Singarhar*,
And *Juhy*, like a rising star,
Strong *Chempa*, darted by *Camdew*,
And *Mulsery* of paler hue,
Cayora[22], which the *Ranies* wear
In tangles of their silken hair,
Round[23] *Babul*-flow'rs, and *Gulachein*
Dyed like the shell of Beauty's Queen,
Sweet *Mindy*[24] press'd for crimson stains,
And sacred *Tulsy*[25], pride of plains,
With *Sewty*, small unblushing rose,
Their odours mix, their tints disclose,
And, as a gemm'd tiara, bright,
Paint the fresh branches with delight.
One tree above all others tower'd
With shrubs and saplings close imbower'd,
For every blooming child of Spring
Paid homage to the verdant King:
Aloft a solitary fruit,
Full sixty cubits from the root,
Kiss'd by the breeze, luxuriant hung,
Soft chrysolite with em'ralds strung.

21. The varieties of *Bela*, and the *three* flowers next mentioned, are beautiful species of *Jasmin*.

22. The *Indian* Spikenard.

23. The *Mimosa*, or true *Acacia*, that produces the *Arabian* Gum.

24. Called *Alhhinna* by the *Arabs*.

25. Of the kind called *Ocymum*.

'Try we, said *Erjun* indiscreet,
If yon proud fruit be sharp or sweet;
My shaft its parent stalk shall wound:
Receive it, ere it reach the ground.'

Swift as his word, an arrow flew:
The dropping prize besprent with dew
The brothers, in contention gay,
Catch, and on gather'd herbage lay.

That instant scarlet lightnings flash,
And *Jemna's* waves her borders lash,
Crishna from *Swerga's*[26] height descends,
Observant of his mortal friends:
Not such, as in his earliest years,
Among his wanton cowherd peers,
In *Gocul* or *Brindaben's*[27] glades,
He sported with the dairy-maids;
Or, having pip'd and danc'd enough,
Clos'd the brisk night with *blindman's-buff*[28];
(List, antiquaries, and record
This pastime of the *Gopia's* Lord[29])
But radiant with ethereal fire:
Nared alone could bards inspire
In lofty *Slokes*[30] his mien to trace,
And unimaginable grace.

26. The heaven of *Indra*, or the Empyreum.
27. In the district of *Mathura*, not far from *Agra*.
28. This is told in the *Bhagawat*.
29. GOPY NATH, a title of Crishna, corresponding with *Nymphagetes*, an epithet of *Neptune*.
30. Tetrasticks without rhyme.

With human voice, in human form,
He mildly spake, and hush'd the storm :
'O mortals, ever prone to ill !
Too rashly *Erjun* prov'd his skill.
Yon fruit a pious *Muny*[31] owns,
Assistant of our heav'nly thrones.
The golden pulp, each month renew'd,
Supplies him with ambrosial food,
Should he the daring archer curse,
Not *Mentra*[32] deep, nor magic verse,
Your gorgeous palaces could save
From flames, your embers, from the wave[33].'
The princes, whom th' immod'rate blaze
Forbids their sightless eyes to raise,
With doubled hands his aid implore,
And vow submission to his lore.
'One remedy, and simply one,
Or take,' said he, 'or be undone :
Let each his crimes or faults confess,
The greatest name, omit the less ;
Your actions, words, e'en thoughts reveal ;
No part must *Draupady* conceal :
So shall the fruit, as each applies
The faithful charm, *ten cubits* rise ;

31. An inspired Writer : *twenty* are so called.

32. Incantation.

33. This will receive illustration from a passage in the *Ramayen :* 'Even he, who cannot be slain by the ponderous arms of *Indra*, nor by those of *Caley*, nor by the terrible *Cheera* (or *Discus*), of *Vishnu*, shall be destroyed, if a Brahmen execrate him, *as if he were consumed by fire.*'

Till, if the dame be frank and true,
It join the branch, where late it grew.'
He smil'd and shed a transient gleam;
Then vanish'd like a morning dream.
Now, long entranc'd, each waking brother
Star'd with amazement on another,
Their consort's cheek forgot its glow,
And pearly tears began to flow;
When *Yudishteir*, high-gifted man,
His plain confession thus began.
'Inconstant fortune's wreathed smiles,
Duryodhen's rage, *Duryodhen's* wiles,
Fires rais'd for this devoted head,
E'en poison for my brethren spread,
My wand'rings through wild scenes of woe,
And persecuted life, you know.
Rude wassailers defil'd my halls,
And riot shook my palace-walls,
My treasures wasted. This and more
With resignation calm I bore;
But, when the late-descending god
Gave all I wish'd with soothing nod,
When, by his counsel and his aid,
Our banners danc'd, our clarions bray'd
(Be this my greatest crime confess'd),
Revenge sate ruler in my breast:
I panted for the tug of arms,
For skirmish hot, for fierce alarms;
Then had my shaft *Duryodhen* rent,
This heart had glow'd with sweet content.'

He ceas'd: the living gold upsprung,
And from the bank *ten* cubits hung.
Embolden'd by this fair success,
Next *Erjun* hasten'd to confess:
'When I with *Aswatthama* fought;
My noose the fell assassin caught;
My spear transfix'd him to the ground:
His giant limbs firm cordage bound:
His holy thread extorted awe
Spar'd by religion and by law;
But, when his murd'rous hands I view'd
In blameless kindred gore imbued,
Fury my boiling bosom sway'd,
And *Rage* unsheath'd my willing blade:
Then, had not *Crishna's* arm divine
With gentle touch suspended mine,
This hand a *Brahmen* had destroy'd,
And vultures with his blood been cloy'd.'
The fruit, forgiving *Erjun's* dart,
Ten cubits rose with eager start.
Flush'd with some tints of honest shame,
Bheima to his confession came:
'Twas at a feast for battles won
From *Dhriterashtra's* guileful son,
High on the board in vases pil'd
All vegetable nature smil'd:
Proud *Anaras*[34] his beauties told,
His verdant crown and studs of gold,

34 Ananas.

To *Dallim*[35], whose soft rubies laugh'd
Bursting with juice, that gods have quass'd;
Ripe *Kellas*[36] here in heaps were seen,
Kellas, the golden and the green,
With *Ambas*[37] priz'd on distant coasts,
Whose birth the fertile *Ganga* boasts:
(Some gleam like silver, some outshine
Wrought ingots from *Besoara's* mine):
Corindas there, too sharp alone,
With honey mix'd, impurpled shone;
Talsans[38] his liquid crystal spread
Pluck'd from high *Tara's* tufted head;
Round *Jamas*[39] delicate as fair,
Like rose-water perfum'd the air;
Bright salvers high-rais'd *Comlas*[40] held
Like topazes, which *Amrit*[41] swell'd;
While some delicious *Attas*[42] bore,
And *Catels*[43] warm, a sugar'd store;
Others with *Bela's* grains were heap'd,
And mild *Papayas* honey-steep'd;
Or sweet *Ajeirs*[44] the red and pale,
Sweet to the taste and in the gale.
Here mark'd we purest basons fraught
With sacred cream and fam'd *Joghrat*;
Nor saw we not rich bowls contain
The *Chawla's*[45] light nutritious grain,

35. Pomegranate. 36. Plantains. 37. Mangos. 38. Palmyra-fruit. 39. Rose-apples. 40. Oranges. 41. The Hindu Nectar. 42. Custard-apples. 43. Jaik-fruit. 44. Guayavas. 45. Rice.

Some virgin-like in native pride,
And some with strong *Haldea*[46] dyed,
Some tasteful to dull palates made
If *Merich*[47] lend his fervent aid,
Or *Langa*[48] shap'd like od'rous nails,
Whose scent o'er groves of spice prevails,
Or *Adda*[49], breathing gentle heat,
Or *Joutery*[50] both warm and sweet.
Supiary[51] next (in *Pana*[52] chew'd,
And *Gatha*[53], with strong pow'rs endued,
Mix'd with *Elachy's*[54] glowing seeds,
Which some remoter climate breeds),
Near *Jeifel*[55] sate, like *Jeifel* fram'd
Though not for equal fragrance nam'd:
Last, *Naryal*[56], whom all ranks esteem,
Pour'd in full cups his dulcet stream:
Long I survey'd the doubtful board
With each high delicacy stor'd;
Then freely gratified my soul,
From many a dish, and many a bowl,
Till health was lavish'd, as my time:
Intemp'rance was my fatal crime.'
Uprose the fruit; and now *mid-way*
Suspended shone like blazing day.
Nacul then spoke: (a blush o'erspread
His cheeks, and conscious droop'd his head):
'Before *Duryodhen*, ruthless king,
Taught his fierce darts in air to sing,

46. Turmeric. 47. Indian Pepper. 48. Cloves. 49. Ginger. 50. Mace. 51. Areca-nut. 52. Betel-leaf. 53. What we call Japan-earth. 54. Cardamums., 55. Nutmeg. 56. Cocoa-nut.

With bright-arm'd ranks, by *Crishna* sent,
Elate from *Indraprest*[57] I went
Through *Eastern* realms; and vanquish'd all
From rough *Almora* to *Nipal*.
Where ev'ry mansion, new or old,
Flam'd with Barbaric gems and gold.
Here shone with pride the regal stores
On iv'ry roofs, and cedrine floors;
There diadems of price unknown
Blaz'd with each all-attracting stone;
Firm diamonds, like fix'd honour true,
Some pink, and some of yellow hue,
Some black, yet not the less esteem'd;
The rest like tranquil *Jemna* gleam'd,
When in her bed the *Gopia* lave
Betray'd by the pellucid wave.
Like raging fire the ruby glow'd,
Or soft, but radiant, water show'd;
Pure amethysts, in richest ore
Oft found, a purple vesture wore;
Sapphirs, like yon etherial plain;
Em'ralds, like *Peipel*[58] fresh with rain;
Gay topazes, translucent gold;
Pale chrysolites of softer mould;
Fam'd beryls, like the surge marine,
Light-azure mix'd with modest green;
Refracted ev'ry varying dye,
Bright as yon bow, that girds the sky.

57. DEHLY. 58. A sacred tree like an *Aspin*.

Here opals, which all hues unite,
Display'd their many-tinctur'd light,
With turcoises divinely blue
(Though doubts arise, where first they grew,
Whether chaste elephantine bone
By min'rals ting'd, or native stone),
And pearls unblemish'd, such as deck
Bhavany's[59] wrist or *Lecshmy's*[60] neck.
Each castle ras'd, each city storm'd,
Vast loads of pillag'd wealth I form'd,
Not for my coffers; though they bore,
As you decreed, my lot and more.
Too pleas'd the brilliant heap I stor'd,
Too charming seem'd the guarded hoard:
An odious vice this heart assail'd;
Base *Av'rice* for a time prevail'd.
Th' enchanted orb *ten* cubits flew,
Strait as the shaft, which *Erjun* drew.
Sehdio, with youthful ardour bold,
Thus, penitent, his failings told:
'From clouds, by folly rais'd, these eyes
Experience clear'd, and made me wise;
For, when the crash of battle roar'd,
When death rain'd blood from spear and sword,
When, in the tempest of alarms,
Horse roll'd on horse, arms clash'd with arms,
Such acts I saw by others done,
Such perils brav'd, such trophies won,

59. The *Indian* VENUS. 60. The *Indian* CERES.

That, while my patriot bosom glow'd,
Though some faint skill, some strength I show'd,
And, no dull gazer on the field,
This hero slew, that forc'd to yield,
Yet, meek humility, to thee,
When *Erjun* fought, low sank my knee:
But, ere the din of war began,
When black'ning cheeks just mark'd the man,
Myself invincible I deem'd,
And great, without a rival, seem'd.
Whene'er I sought the sportful plain,
No youth of all the martial train
With arm so strong or eye so true
The *Checra's*[61] pointed circle threw;
None when the polish'd cane we bent,
So far the light-wing'd arrow sent;
None from the broad elastic reed,
Like me, gave *Agnyastra*[62] speed,
Or spread its flames with nicer art
In many an unextinguish'd dart;
Or, when in imitated fight
We sported till departing light,
None saw me to the ring advance
With falchion keen or quiv'ring lance,
Whose force my rooted seat could shake,
Or on my steed impression make:
No charioteer, no racer fleet
O'er took my wheels or rapid feet.

61. A radiated metalline ring, used as a missile weapon.
62. Fire-arms, or rockets, early known in *India*.

Next, when the woody heights we sought,
With madd'ning elephants I fought:
In vain their high-priz'd tusks they gnash'd;
Their trunked heads my *Geda*[63] mash'd.
No buffalo, with phrensy strong,
Could bear my clatt'ring thunder long:
No pard or tiger, from the wood
Reluctant brought, this arm withstood.
Pride in my heart his mansion fix'd,
And with pure drops black poison mix'd.'
Swift rose the fruit, exalted now
Ten cubits from his natal bough.
Fair *Draupady*, with soft delay,
Then spake: 'Heav'n's mandate I obey;
Though nought, essential to be known,
Has heav'n to learn, or I to own.
When scarce a damsel, scarce a child,
In early bloom your handmaid smil'd,
Love of the World her fancy mov'd,
Vain pageantry her heart approv'd:
Her form, she thought, and lovely mien,
All must admire, when all had seen:
A thirst of pleasure and of praise
(With shame I speak) engross'd my days;
Nor were my night-thoughts, I confess,
Free from solicitude for dress;
How best to bind my flowing hair
With art, yet with an artless air

63. A mace, or club.

(My hair, like musk in scent and hue ;
Oh ! blacker far and sweeter too) ;
In what nice braid or glossy curl
To fix a diamond or a pearl,
And where to smooth the love-spread toils
With nard or jasmin's fragrant oils ;
How to adjust the golden *Teic*[64],
And most adorn my forehead sleek ;
What *Condals*[65] should emblaze my ears,
Like *Seita's* waves[66] or *Seita's* tears[67] ;
How elegantly to dispose
Bright circlets for my well-form'd nose ;
With strings of rubies how to deck,
Or em'rald rows, my stately neck,
While some that ebon tow'r embrac'd
Some pendent sought my slender waist ;
How next my purfled veil to chose
From silken stores of varied hues ;
Which would attract the roving view,
Pink, voilet, purple, orange, blue ;
The loveliest mantle to select,
Or unembellish'd or bedeck'd ;
And how my twisted scarf to place
With most inimitable grace ;
(Too thin its warp, too fine its woof,
For eyes of males not beauty-proof) ;

64. Properly *Teica*, an ornament of gold, placed above the nose.
65. Pendents. 66. SEITA CUND, or the *Pool* of *Seita*, the wife of RAM, is the name given to the wonderful spring at *Mengeir*, with boiling water of exquisite clearness and purity. 67. Her tears, when she was made captive by the giant *Rawan*.

What skirts the mantle best would suit,
Ornate with stars or tissued fruit,
The flow'r-embroider'd or the plain
With silver or with golden vein;
The *Chury*[68] bright, which gayly shows
Fair objects, aptly to compose;
How each smooth arm and each soft wrist
By richest *Cosecs*[69] might be kiss'd;
While some, my taper ankles round,
With sunny radiance ting'd the ground.
O waste of many a precious hour!
O *Vanity*, how vast thy pow'r!'
Cubits twice four th' ambrosial flew,
Still from its branch disjoin'd by *two*.
Each husband now, with wild surprise,
His compeers and his consort eyes;
When *Yudishteir*: 'Thy female breast
Some faults, perfidious, hath suppress'd.
Oh! give the close-lock'd secret room,
Unfold its bud, expand its bloom;
Lest, sinking with our crumbled halls,
We see red flames devour their walls.'
Abash'd, yet with a decent pride,
Firm *Draupady* the fact denied;
Till, through an arched alley green,
The limit of that sacred scene,
She saw the dreaded *Muny* go
With stepsmajestically slow;

68. A small miror worn in a ring. 69. Bracelets.

Then said : (a stifled sigh she stole,)
And show'd the conflict of her soul
By broken speech and flutt'ring heart,
'One trifle more I must impart :
A *Brahmen* learn'd, of pure intent
And look demure, one morn you sent,
With me, from *Sanscrit* old, to read
Each high *Puran*[70] each holy *Veid.*
His thread, which *Brehma's* lineage show'd!
O'er his left shoulder graceful flow'd ;
Of *Crishna* and his nymphs he redde,
How with nine maids the dance he led ;
How they ador'd, and he repaid
Their homage in the sylvan shade.
While this gay tale my spirits cheer'd,
So keen the *Pendit's* eyes appear'd,
So sweet his voice—a blameless fire
This bosom could not but inspire.
Bright as a God he seem'd to stand :
The rev'rend volume left his hand,
With mine he press'd'—With deep despair
Brothers on brothers wildly stare :
From *Erjun* flew a wrathful glance ;
Tow'rd them they saw their dread advance ;
Then, trembling, breathless, pale with fear,
' Hear,' said the matron, 'calmly hear !
By *Tulsy's* leaf the truth I speak—
The *Brahmen* ONLY KISS'D MY CHEEK.'

70. A Mythological and Historical Poem.

Strait its full height the wonder rose,
Glad with its native branch to close.
Now to the walk approach'd the Sage
Exulting in his verdant age:
His hands, that touch'd his front, express'd
Due rev'rence to each princely guest,
Whom to his rural board he led
In simple delicacy spread,
With curds their palates to regale,
And cream-cups from the *Gopia's* pail.
Could you, ye Fair, like this black wife,
Restore us to primeval life,
And bid that apple, pluck'd for *Eve*
By him, who might all wives deceive,
Hang from its parent bough once more
Divine and perfect, as before,
Would you confess your little faults?
(Great onces were never in your thoughts);
Would you the secret wish unfold,
Or in your heart's full casket hold?
Would you disclose your inmost mind,
And speak plain truth, to bless mankind?
'What!' said the Guardian of our realm,
With waving crest and fiery helm,
'What! are the fair, whose heav'nly smiles
Rain glory through my cherish'd isles,
Are they less virtuous or less true
Than *Indian* dames of sooty hue?
No, by these arms. The cold surmise
And doubt injurious vainly rise.

Yet dares a bard, who better knows,
This point distrustfully propose ;
Vain fabler now ! though oft before
His harp has cheer'd my sounding shore.'
With brow austere the martial maid
Spoke, and majestic trod the glade :
To that fell cave her course she held,
Where *Scandal*, bane of mortals, dwell'd.
Outstretch'd on filth the pest she found,
Black fetid venom streaming round :
A gloomy light just serv'd to show
The darkness of the den below.
Britannia with resistless might
Soon dragg'd him from his darling night :
The snakes, that o'er his body curl'd,
And flung his poison through the world,
Confounded with the flash of day,
Hiss'd horribly a hellish lay.
His eyes with flames and blood suffus'd,
Long to th' ethereal beam unus'd,
Fierce in their gory sockets roll'd ;
And desperation made him bold :
Pleas'd with the thought of human woes,
On scaly dragon feet he rose.
Thus, when *Asurs* with impious rage,
Durst horrid war with *Devta's* wage,
And darted many a burning mass
E'en on the brow of gemm'd *Cailas*,
High o'er the rest, on serpents rear'd
The grisly king of *Deits* appear'd.

The nymph beheld the fiend advance,
And couch'd her far-extending lance:
Dire drops he threw; th' infernal tide
Her helm and silver hauberk dyed:
Her moonlike shield before her hung;
The monster struck, the monster stung:
Her spear with many a griding wound
Fast nail'd him to the groaning ground.
The wretch, from juster vengeance free,
Immortal born by heav'n's decree,
With chains of adamant secur'd,
Deep in cold gloom she left immur'd.

Now reign at will, victorious Fair,
In *British*, or in *Indian*, air!
Still with each envying flow'r adorn
Your tresses radiant as the morn;
Still let each *Asiatic* dye.
Rich tints for your gay robes supply;
Still through the dance's laby'rinth float,
And swell the sweetly-lengthen'd note;
Still, on proud steeds or glitt'ring cars,
Rise on the course like beamy stars;
And, when charm'd circles round you close
Of rhyming bards and smiling beaux,
Whilst all with eager looks contend
Their wit or worth to recommend,
Still let your mild, yet piercing, eyes
Impartially adjudge the prize.

A HYMN

TO

CAMDEO.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE *Hindu* God, to whom the following poem is addressed, appears evidently the same with the *Grecian* EROS and the *Roman* CUPIDO ; but the *Indian* description of his person and arms, his family, attendants, and attributes, has new and peculiar beauties.

According to the mythology of *Hindustan*, he was the son of MAYA, or the general *attracting* power, and married to RETTY or *Affection* ; and his bosom friend is BESSENT or *Spring:* he is represented as a beautiful youth, sometimes conversing with his mother and consort in the midst of his gardens and temples; sometimes riding by moonlight on a parrot or lory, and attended by dancing-girls or nymphs, the foremost of whom bears his colours, which are a *fish* on a red ground. His favourite place of resort is a large tract of country round AGRA, and principally the plains of *Matra*, where KRISHEN also and the nine GOPIA,

who are clearly the *Apollo* and *Muses* of the *Greeks*, usually spend the night with music and dance. His bow of suggar-cane or flowers, with a string of bees, and his *five* arrows, each pointed with an *Indian* blossom of a heating quality, are allegories equally new and beautiful. He has at least twenty-three names, most of which are introduced in the hymn : that of *Cam* or *Cama* signifies *desire*, a sense which it also bears in ancient and modern *Persian ;* and it is possible, that the words *Dipuc* and *Cupid*, which have the same signification, may have the same origin ; since we know, that the old *Hetruscans*, from whom great part of the *Roman* language and religion was derived, and whose system had a near affinity with that of the *Persians* and *Indians*, used to write their lines alternately forwards and backwards, as furrows are made by the plough ; and, though the two last letters of *Cupido* may be only the grammatical termination, as in *libido* and *capedo*, yet the primary root of *cupio* is contained in the three first letters. The seventh stanza alludes to the bold attempt of this deity to wound the great God *Mahadeo*, for which he was punished by a flame consuming his corporeal nature and reducing him to a mental essence ; and hence his chief dominion is over the *minds* of mortals, of such deities as he is permitted to subdue.

THE HYMN.

WHAT potent God from *Agra's* orient bow'rs
Floats thro' the lucid air, whilst living flow'rs
With sunny twine the vocal arbours wreathe,
And gales enamour'd heav'nly fragrance breathe?
 Hail pow'r unknown! for at thy beck
 Vales and groves their bosoms deck,
 And ev'ry laughing blossom dresses
 With gems of dew his musky tresses.
I feel, I feel thy genial flame divine,
And hallow thee and kiss thy shrine.
 "Knowst thou not me?" Celestial sounds I hear!
"Knowst thou not me?" Ah, spare a mortal ear!
"Behold"—My swimming eyes entranc'd I raise,
But oh! they shrink before th' excessive blaze.
 Yes, son of *Maya*, yes, I know
 Thy bloomy shafts and cany bow,
 Cheeks with youthful glory beaming,
 Locks in braids ethereal streaming,
Thy scaly standard, thy mysterious arms,
And all thy pains and all thy charms.
 God of each lovely sight, each lovely sound,
Soul-kindling, world-inflaming, stary-crown'd,
Eternal *Cama!* Or doth *Smara* bright,
Or proud *Ananga* give thee more delight?

Whate'er thy seat, whate'er thy name,
Seas, earth, and air, thy reign proclaim;
Wreathy smiles and roseate pleasures
Are thy richest, sweetest treasures.
All animals to thee their tribute bring,
And hail thee universal king.
Thy consort mild, *Affection* ever true,
Graces thy side, her vest of glowing hue,
And in her train twelve blooming girls advance,
Touch golden strings and knit the mirthful dance.
Thy dreaded implements they bear,
And wave them in the scented air,
Each with pearls her neck adorning,
Brighter than the tears of morning.
Thy crimson ensign, which before them flies,
Decks with new stars the sapphire skies.
God of the flow'ry shafts and flow'ry bow,
Delight of all above and all below!
Thy lov'd companion, constant from his birth,
In heav'n clep'd *Bessent*, and gay *Spring* on earth,
Weaves thy green robe and flaunting bow'rs,
And from thy clouds draws balmy show'rs,
He with fresh arrows fills thy quiver,
(Sweet the gift and sweet the giver!)
And bids the many-plumed warbling throng
Burst the pent blossoms with their song.
He bends the luscious cane, and twists the string
With bees, how sweet! but ah, how keen their sting
He with five flow'rets tips thy ruthless darts,
Which thro' five senses pierce enraptur'd hearts:

Strong *Chumpa*, rich in od'rous gold,
Warm *Amer*, nurs'd in heav'nly mould,
Dry *Nagkeser* in silver smiling,
Hot *Kiticum* our sense beguiling,
And last, to kindle fierce the scorching flame,
Loveshaft, which gods bright *Bela* name.
Can men resist thy pow'r, when *Krishen* yields,
Krishen, who still in *Matra's* holy fields
Tunes harps immortal, and to strains divine
Dances by moonlight with the *Gopia* nine?
But, when thy daring arm untam'd
At *Mahadeo* a loveshaft aim'd,
Heav'n shook, and, smit with stony wonder,
Told his deep dread in bursts of thunder,
Whilst on thy beauteous limbs an azure fire
Blaz'd forth, which never must expire.
O thou for ages born, yet ever young,
For ages may thy *Bramin's* lay be sung!
And, when thy lory spreads his em'rald wings
To waft thee high above the tow'rs of kings,
Whilst o'er thy throne the moon's pale light
Pours her soft radiance thro' the night,
And to each floating cloud discovers
The haunts of blest or joyless lovers,
Thy mildest influence to thy bard impart,
To warm, but not consume, his heart.

TWO HYMNS

TO

PRACRITI.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN all our conversations with learned *Hindus* we find them enthusiastic admirers of Poetry, which they consider as a divine art, that had been practised for numberless ages in heaven, before it was revealed on earth by VALMIC, whose great Heroic Poem is fortunately preserved: the *Brahmans* of course prefer that poetry, which they believe to have been *actually inspired*; while the *Vaidyas*, who are in general perfect grammarians and good poets, but are not suffered to read any of the *sacred* writings except the *Ayurveda*, or *Body of Medical Tracts*, speak with rapture of their innumerable *popular* poems, *Epic*, *Lyric*, and *Dramatic*, which were composed by men not literally inspired, but called, metaphorically, the sons of SERESWATI, or MINERVA; among whom the *Pendits* of all sects, nations, and degrees are unanimous in giving the prize of glory to CALIDASA, who flourished in the court of VICRAMADITYA, fifty-seven years before Christ. He

wrote several *Dramas*, one of which, entitled SACONTALA, is in my possession; and the subject of it appears to be as interesting as the composition is beautiful: besides these he published the *Meghaduta*, or cloud-messenger, and the *Nalodaya*, or rise of NALA, both elegant love-tales; the *Raghuvansa*, an Heroic Poem; and the *Cumara Sambhava*, or birth of CUMARA, which supplied me with materials for the first of the following Odes. I have not indeed yet read it; since it could not be correctly copied for me during the short interval, in which it is in my power to amuse myself with literature; but I have heard the story told, both in *Sanscrit* and *Persian*, by many *Pendits*, who had no communication with each other; and their outline of it coincided so perfectly, that I am convinced of its correctness: that outline is here filled up, and exhibited in a lyric form, partly in the *Indian*, partly in the *Grecian*, taste; and great will be my pleasure, when I can again find time for such amusements, in reading the whole poem of CALIDASA, and in comparing my descriptions with the original composition. To anticipate the story in a preface would be to destroy the interest, that may be taken in the poem; a disadvantage attending all prefatory arguments, of which those prefixed to the several books of TASSO, and to the Dramas of METASTASIO, are obvious instances; but, that any interest may be taken in the two hymns addressed to PRACRITI, under different names, it is necessary to ren-

der them intelligible by a previous explanation of the mythological allusions, which could not but occur in them. 11343.

ISWARA or ISA, and ISANI or ISI, are unquestionably the OSIRIS and ISIS of Egypt; for, though neither a resemblance of names, nor a similarity of character, would separately prove the identity of *Indian* and *Egyptian* Deities, yet, when they both concur, with the addition of numberless corroborating circumstances, they form a proof little short of demonstration. The *female* divinity, in the mythological systems of the East, represents the active *power* of the *male*; and that ISI means *active nature*, appears evidently from the word *sacta*, which is derived from *sacti*, or *power*, and applied to those *Hindus*, who direct their adoration principally to that goddess: this feminine character of PRACRITI, or *created nature*, is so familiar in most languages, and even in our own, that the gravest *English* writers, on the most serious subjects of religion and philosophy, speak of *her* operations, as if *she* were actually an animated being; but such personifications are easily misconceived by the multitude, and have a strong tendency to polytheism. The principal operations of nature are, not the absolute annihilation and new creation of what we call *material substances*, but the temporary extinction and reproduction, or, rather in one word, the *transmutation*, of *forms*; whence the epithet *Polymorphos* is aptly given to nature by *European* philoso-

phers : hence ISWARA, SIVA, HARA (for those are his names and near a thousand more), united with ISI, represent the *secondary causes*, whatever they may be, of natural phenomena, and principally those of temporary *destruction* and *regeneration* ; but the *Indian* ISIS appears in a variety of characters, especially in those of PARVATI, CALI, DURGA, and BHAVANI, which bear a strong resemblance to the JUNO of HOMER, to HECATE, to the armed PALLAS, and to the *Lucretian* VENUS.

The name PARVATI took its rise from a wild poetical fiction. HIMALAVA, or the *Mansion of Snow*, is the title given by the *Hindus* to that vast chain of mountains, which limits *India* to the north, and embraces it with its eastern and western arms, both extending to the ocean ; the former of those arms is called *Chandrasec'hara*, or the *Moon's Rock* ; and the second, which reaches as far west as the mouths of the *Indus*, was named by the ancients *Montes Parveti*. These hills are held sacred by the *Indians*, who suppose them to be the terrestrial haunt of the God ISWARA. The mountain *Himalaya*, being personified, is represented as a powerful monarch, whose wife was MENA : their daughter is named PARVATI, or *Mountain-born*, and DURGA, or *of difficult access* ; but the *Hindus* believe her to have been married to SIVA in a pre-existent state, when she bore the name of SATI. The daughter of HIMALAVA had two sons ; GANESA, or the *Lord of Spirits*, adored as the wisest of Deities, and always invoked

at the beginning of every literary work, and CUMARA SCANDA, or CARTICEYA, commander of the celestial armies.

The pleasing fiction of CAMA, the *Indian* CUPID, and his friend VASANTA, or the Spring, has been the subject of another poem; and here it must be remembered, that the God of Love is named also SMARA, CANDARPA, and ANANGA. One of his arrows is called *Mellica*, the *Nyctanthes* of our Botanists, who very unadvisedly reject the vernacular names of most *Asiatic* plants: it is beautifully introduced by CALIDASA into this lively couplet:

Mellicamuculc bhati gunjanmattamadhuvratah,
Prayane panchaoanasya sanc'hamapurayanniva.

'The intoxicated bee shines and murmurs in the fresh-blown *Mellica*, like him who gives breath to a white conch in the procession of the God with five arrows.'

A critic, to whom CALIDASA repeated this verse, observed, that the comparison was not exact: since the bee sits on the blossom itself, and does not murmur at the end of the tube, like him who blows a conch: 'I was aware of that, said the poet, and, therefore, described the bee as *intoxicated*: a drunken musician would blow the shell at the wrong end:' There was more than wit in this answer: it was a just rebuke to a dull critic; for poetry delights in *general* images, and is so far from being a perfect imitation, that a scrupulous exactness of descriptions and similes, by leaving nothing for the imagination

to supply, never fails to diminish or destroy the pleasure of every reader, who has an imagination to be gratified.

It may here be observed, that *Nymphæa*, not *Lotos*, is the *generic* name in *Europe* of the flower consecrated to ISIS: the *Persians* know by the name of *Nilufer* that species of it, which the Botanists ridiculously call *Nelumbo*, and which is remarkable for its curious *pericarpium*, where each of the seeds contains in miniature the leaves of a perfect vegetable. The *lotos* of HOMER was probably the *sugar-cane*, and that of LINNÆUS is a papilionaceous plant; but he gives the same name to another species of the *Nymphæa;* and the word is so constantly applied among us in *India* to the *Nilufer*, that any other would be hardly intelligible: the *blue* lotos grows in *Cashmir* and in *Persia*, but not in *Bengal*, where we see only the *red* and the *white;* and hence occasion is taken to feign, that the lotos of *Hindustan* was dyed crimson by the blood of SIVA.

CUVERA, mentioned in the fourteenth stanza, is the God of Wealth, supposed to reside in a magnificent city, called *Alaca;* and VRIHASPATI, or the Genius of the planet *Jupiter*, is the preceptor of the Gods in *Swerga* or the firmament: he is usually represented as their orator, when any message is carried from them to one of the three superior Deities.

The lamentations of RETI, the wife of CAMA, fill a whole book in the *Sanscrit* poem, as I am in-

formed by my teacher, a learned *Vaidya;* who is restrained only from reading the book, which contains a description of the nuptials; for the ceremonies of a marriage where BRAHMA himself officiated as the father of the bridegroom, are too holy to be known by any but *Brahmans.*

The achievements of DURGA in her martial character as the patroness of *Virtue*, and her battle with a demon in the shape of a buffalo, are the subject of many episodes in the *Puranas* and *Cavyas*, or *sacred* and *popular* poems; but a full account of them would have destroyed the unity of the Ode, and they are barely alluded to in the last stanza.

It seemed proper to change the measure, when the goddess was to be addressed as BHAVANI, or the *power of fecundity;* but such a change, though very common in *Sanscrit*, has its inconveniences in *European* poetry: a distinct Hymn is therefore appropriated to her in that capacity; for the explanation of which we need only premise, that LACSHMI is the Goddess of *Abundance;* that the *Cetaca* is a fragrant and beautiful plant of the *Diœcian* kind, known to Botanists by the name of *Pandanus;* and that the *Durgotsava*, or great festival of BHAVANI at the close of the rains, ends, in throwing the image of the goddess into the *Ganges* or other sacred water.

I am not conscious of having left unexplained any difficult allusion in the two poems; and have only to add (lest *European* critics should consider a

few of the images as inapplicable to *Indian* manners), that the ideas of *snow* and *ice* are familiar to the *Hindus;* that the mountains of *Himalaya* may be clearly discerned from a part of *Bengal*; that the *Grecian* HÆMUS is the *Sanscrit* word *haimas*, meaning *snowy*; and that funeral *urns* may be seen perpetually on the banks of the river.

The two Hymns are neither translations from any other poems, nor imitations of any; and have nothing of PINDAR in them except the measures, which are nearly the same, syllable for syllable, with those of the first and second *Nemean* Odes: more musical stanzas might perhaps have been formed; but, in every art, variety and novelty are considerable sources of pleasure. The style and manner of PINDAR have been greatly mistaken; and, that a distinct idea of them may be conceived by such, as have not access to that inimitable poet in his own language, I cannot refrain from subjoining the first *Nemean* Ode*, not only in the same measure as nearly as possible, but almost word for word, with the original; those epithets and phrases only being necessarily added, which are printed in *Italic* letters.

* See the first Nemean ode of Pindar.

THE HYMN

TO

DURGA.

I. 1.

FROM thee begins the solemn air,
Ador'd GANESA; next, thy sire we praise
(Him, from whose red clust'ring hair
A new-born crescent sheds propitious rays,
Fair as GANGA's curling foam),
Dread ISWARA; who lov'd o'er awful mountains,
Rapt in prescience deep, to roam,
But chiefly those, whence holy rivers gush,
Bright from their secret fountains,
And o'er the realms of BRAHMA rush.

I. 2.

Rock above rock they ride sublime,
And lose their summits in blue fields of day,
Fashion'd first, when rolling time,
Vast infant, in his golden cradle lay,
Bidding endless ages run
And wreath their giant heads in snows eternal
Gilt by each revolving sun;
Though neither morning beam, nor noontide glare,
In wintry sign or vernal,
Their adamantine strength impair;

I. 3.

Nor e'en the fiercest summer heat
Could thrill the palace, where their Monarch reign'd
On his frost-impearled seat,
(Such height had unremitted virtue gain'd !)
HIMALAYA, to whom a lovely child,
Sweet PARVATI, sage MENA bore,
Who now, in earliest bloom, saw heav'n adore
Her charms; earth languish, till she smil'd.

II. 1.

But she to love no tribute paid ;
Great ISWARA her pious cares engag'd:
Him, who Gods and fiends dismay'd,
She sooth'd with off'rings meek, when most he rag'd.
On a morn, when, edg'd with light,
The lake-born flow'rs their sapphire cups expanded
Laughing at the scatter'd night,
A vale remote and silent pool she sought,
Smooth-footed, lotos-handed,
And braids of sacred blossoms wrought :

II. 2.

Not for her neck, which, unadorn'd,
Bade envying antelopes their beauties hide :
Art she knew not, or she scorn'd ;
Nor had her language e'en a name for pride.
To the God, who, fix'd in thought,
Sat in a crystal cave new worlds designing,
Softly sweet her gift she brought,
And spread the garland o'er his shoulders broad,

Where serpents huge lay twining,
Whose hiss the round creation aw'd.

II. 3.

He view'd, half-smiling, half severe,
The prostrate maid—That moment through the rocks
He, who decks the purple year,
VASANTA, vain of odorif'rous locks,
With CAMA, hors'd on infant breezes flew :
(Who knows not CAMA, nature's king?)
VASANTA barb'd the shaft and fix'd the string;
The living bow CANDARPA drew.

III. 1.

Dire sacrilege ! The chosen reed,
That SMARA pointed with transcendent art,
Glanc'd with unimagin'd speed,
And ting'd its blooming barb in SIVA'S heart :
Glorious flow'r, in heav'n proclaim'd
Rich *Mellica*, with balmy breath delicious,
And on earth *Nyctanthes* nam'd !
Some drops divine, that o'er the lotos blue
Trickled in rills auspicious,
Still mark it with a crimson hue.

III. 2.

Soon clos'd the wound its hallow'd lips ;
But nature felt the pain : heav'n's blazing eye
Sank absorb'd in sad eclipse,
And meteors rare betray'd the trembling sky ;
When a flame, to which compar'd
The keenest lightnings were but idle flashes,

From that orb all-piercing glar'd,
Which in the front of wrathful HARA rolls,
And soon to silver ashes
Reduc'd th' inflamer of our souls.

III. 3.

VASANTA, for thee a milder doom,
Accomplice rash, a thund'ring voice decreed ;
' With'ring live in joyless gloom,
While ten gay signs the dancing seasons lead.
Thy flow'rs, perennial once, now annual made,
The Fish and Ram shall still adorn ;
But, when the Bull has rear'd his golden horn,
Shall, like yon idling rainbow, fade.'

IV. 1.

The thunder ceas'd ; the day return'd ;
But SIVA from terrestrial haunts had fled:
Smit with rapt'rous love he burn'd,
And sigh'd on gemm'd *Cailasa's* viewless head.
Lonely down the mountain steep,
With flutt'ring heart, soft PARVATI descended ;
Nor in drops of nectar'd sleep
Drank solace through the night, but lay alarm'd,
Lest her mean gifts offended
The God her pow'rful beauty charm'd.

IV. 2.

All arts her sorr'wing damsels tried,
Her brow, where wrinkled anguish low'r'd, to smoothe
And, her troubled soul to soothe,
Sagacious MENA mild reproof applied ;

But nor art nor counsel sage,
Nor e'en her sacred parent's tender chiding,
Could her only pain assuage :
The mountain drear she sought, in mantling shade
Her tears and transports hiding,
And oft to her adorer pray'd.

IV. 3.

There on a crag, whose icy rift
Hurl'd night and horror o'er the pool profound,
That with madding eddy swift
Revengeful bark'd his rugged base around,
The beauteous hermit sat; but soon perceiv'd
A *Brahmen* old before her stand,
His rude staff quiv'ring in his wither'd hand,
Who, falt'ring, ask'd for whom she griev'd.

V. 1.

'What graceful youth with accents mild,
Eyes like twin stars, and lips like early morn,
Has thy pensive heart beguil'd?'
"No mortal youth," she said with modest scorn,
"E'er beguil'd my guiltless heart:
Him have I lost, who to these mountains hoary
Bloom celestial could impart.
Thee I salute, thee ven'rate, thee deplore,
Dread SIVA, source of glory,
Which on these rocks must gleam no more!"

V. 2.

'Rare object of a damsel's love,'
The wizard bold replied, 'who, rude and wild,

Leaves eternal bliss above,
And roves o'er wastes where nature never smil'd,
Mounted on his milkwhite bull!
Seek INDRA with aerial bow victorious,
Who from vases ever full
Quaffs love and nectar; seek the festive hall,
Rich caves, and mansion glorious
Of young CUVERA, lov'd by all;

V. 3.

But spurn that sullen wayward God,
That three-ey'd monster, hideous, fierce, untam'd,
Unattir'd, ill-girt, unshod——'
'Such fell impiety', tne nymph exclaim'd,
'Who speaks, must agonize; who hears, must die;
Nor can this vital frame sustain
The pois'nous taint, that runs from vein to vein;
Death may atone the blasphemy.'

VI. 1.

She spoke, and o'er the rifted rocks
Her lovely form with pious phrensy threw;
But beneath her floating locks
And waving robes a thousand breezes flew,
Knitting close their silky plumes,
And in mid-air a downy pillow spreading;
Till, in clouds of rich perfumes
Embalmed, they bore her to a mystic wood;
Where streams of glory shedding,
The well-feign'd *Brahmẽn*, SIVA stood.

VI. 2.

The rest, my song conceal:
Unhallow'd ears the sacrilege might rue.
Gods alone to Gods reveal
In what stupendous notes th' immortals woo.
Straight the sons of light prepar'd
The nuptial feast, heav'n's opal gates unfolding,
Which th' empyreal army shar'd;
And sage HIMALAYA shed blissful tears
With aged eyes beholding
His daughter empress of the spheres.

VI. 3.

Whilst ev'ry lip with nectar glow'd,
The bridegroom blithe his transformation told:
Round the mirthful goblets flow'd,
And laughter free o'er plains of ether roll'd:
'Thee too, like VISHNU,' said the blushing queen,
'Soft MAYA, guileful maid, attends;
But in delight supreme the phantasm ends;
Love crowns the visionary scene.'

VII. 1.

Then rose VRIHASPATI, who reigns
Beyond red MANGALA's terrific sphere,
Wand'ring o'er cerulean plains:
His periods eloquent heav'n loves to hear
Soft as dew on waking flow'rs.
He told, how TARACA with snaky legions,
Envious of supernal pow'rs,
Had menac'd long old MERU's golden head,

And INDRA's beaming regions
With desolation wild had spread:

VII. 2.

How, when the Gods to BRAHMA flew
In routed squadrons, and his help implor'd;
'Sons,' he said, 'from vengeance due
The fiend must wield secure his fiery sword,
(Thus th' unerring Will ordains),
Till from the Great Destroyer's pure embraces,
Knit in love's mysterious chains
With her, who, daughter to the mountain-king,
Yon snowy mansion graces,
CUMARA, warrior-child, shall spring;

VII. 3.

Who, bright in arms of heav'nly proof,
His crest a blazing star, his diamond mail
Colour'd in the rainbow's woof,
The rash invaders fiercely shall assail,
And, on a stately peacock borne, shall rush
Against the dragons of the deep;
Nor shall his thund'ring mace insatiate sleep
Till their infernal chief it crush.'

VIII. 1.

'The splendid host with solemn state
(Still spoke th' ethereal orator unblam'd)
Reason'd high in long debate;
Till, through my counsel provident, they claim'd
Hapless CAMA's potent aid:
At INDRA's wish appear'd the soul's inflamer,

And, in vernal arms array'd,
Engag'd (ah, thoughtless!) in the bold emprise
To tame wide nature's tamer,
And soften Him, who shakes the skies.

VIII. 2.

See now the God, Whom all ador'd,
An ashy heap, the jest of ev'ry gale!
Loss by heav'n and earth deplor'd!
For, love extinguish'd, earth and heav'n must fail.
Mark, how RETI bears his urn,
And tow'rd her widow'd pile with piercing ditty
Points the flames—ah, see it burn!
How ill the fun'ral with the feast agrees!
Come, love's pale sister, pity;
Come, and the lover's wrath appease.'

VIII. 3.

Tumultuous passions, whilst he spoke,
In heav'nly bosoms mix'd their bursting fire,
Scorning frigid wisdom's yoke,
Disdain, revenge, devotion, hope, desire:
Then grief prevail'd; but pity won the prize.
Not SIVA could the charm resist:
'Rise, holy love!' he said; and kiss'd
The pearls, that gush'd from DURGA's eyes.

IX. 1.

That instant through the blest abode,
His youthful charms renew'd, ANANGA came;
High on em'rald plumes he rode
With RETI brighten'd by th' eluded flame;

Nor could young VASANTA mourn
(Officious friend !) his darling lord attending,
Though of annual beauty shorn :
'Love-shafts enow one season shall supply,
He menac'd unoffending,
To rule the rulers of the sky.'

IX. 2.

With shouts the boundless mansion rang ;
And, in sublime accord, the radiant quire
Strains of bridal rapture sang
With glowing conquest join'd and martial ire :
'Spring to life, triumphant son,
Hell's future dread, and heav'n's eternal wonder !
Helm and flaming habergeon
For thee, behold, immortal artists weave,
And edge with keen blue thunder
The blade, that shall th' oppressor cleave.'

IX. 3.

O DURGA, thou hast deign'd to shield
Man's feeble virtue with celestial might,
Gliding from yon jasper field,
And, on a lion borne, hast brav'd the sight;
For, when the demon Vice thy realms defied,
And arm'd with death each arched horn,
Thy golden lance, O goddess mountain-born,
Touch but the pest—He roar'd and died.

THE HYMN

TO

BHABANI.

WHEN time was drown'd in sacred sleep,
And raven darkness brooded o'er the deep,
Reposing on primeval pillows
Of tossing billows,
The forms of animated nature lay;
Till o'er the wild abyss, where love
Sat like a nestling dove,
From heav'n's dun concave shot a golden ray.

Still brighter and more bright it stream'd,
Then, like a thousand suns, resistless gleam'd;
Whilst on the placid waters blooming,
The sky perfuming,
An op'ning Lotos rose, and smiling spread
His azure skirts and vase of gold,
While o'er his foliage roll'd
Drops, that impearl BHAVANI'S orient bed.

Mother of Gods, rich nature's queen,
Thy genial fire emblaz'd the bursting scene;

For, on th' expanded blossom sitting,
With sun-beams knitting
That mystic veil for ever unremov'd,
Thou badst the softly kindling flame
Pervade this peopled frame,
And smiles, with blushes ting'd, the work approv'd.

Goddess, around thy radiant throne
The scaly shoals in spangled vesture shone,
Some slowly through green waves advancing,
Some swiftly glancing,
As each thy mild mysterious pow'r impell'd:
E'en orcs and river-dragons felt
Their iron bosoms melt
With scorching heat; for love the mightiest quell'd.

But straight ascending vapours rare
O'ercanopied thy seat with lucid air,
While, through young INDRA's new dominions
Unnumber'd pinions
Mix'd with thy beams a thousand varying dyes,
Of birds or insects, who pursued
Their flying loves, or woo'd
Them yielding, and with music fill'd the skies.

And now bedeck'd with sparkling isles
Like rising stars, the wat'ry desert smiles;
Smooth plains by waving forests bounded,
With hillocks rounded,
Send forth a shaggy brood, who, frisking light
In mingled flocks or faithful pairs,

Impart their tender cares:
All animals to love their kind invite.

Nor they alone: those vivid gems,
That dance and glitter on their leafy stems,
Thy voice inspires, thy bounty dresses,
Thy rapture blesses,
From yon tall palm, who, like a sunborn king,
His proud tiara spreads elate,
To those, who throng his gate,
Where purple chieftains vernal tribute bring.

A gale so sweet o'er GANGA breathes,
That in soft smiles her graceful cheek she wreathes.
Mark, where her argent brow she raises,
And blushing gazes
On yon fresh *Cetaca*, whose am'rous flow'r
Throws fragrance from his flaunting hair,
While with his blooming fair
He blends perfume, and multiplies the bow'r

Thus, in one vast eternal gyre,
Compact or fluid shapes, instinct with fire,
Lead, as they dance, this gay creation,
Whose mild gradation
Of melting tints illudes the visual ray:
Dense earth in springing herbage lives,
Thence life and nurture gives
To sentient forms, that sink again to clay.

Ye maids and youths on fruitful plains,
Where LACSHMI revels and BHABANI reigns,

Oh, haste ! oh, bring your flow'ry treasures,
To rapid measures
Tripping at eve these hallow'd banks along:
The pow'r, in yon dim shrines ador'd,
To primal waves restor'd,
With many a smiling race shall bless your song.

A HYMN
TO
INDRA.

THE ARGUMENT.

SO many allusions to *Hindu* Mythology occur in the following Ode, that it would be scarce intelligible without an explanatory introduction, which, on every account and on all occasions, appears preferable to notes in the margin.

A distinct idea of the God, whom the poem celebrates, may be collected from a passage in the ninth section of the *Gita*, where the sudden change of measure has an effect similar to that of the finest modulation:

te punyamasadya surendra locam
asnanti divyan dividevabhogan,
te tam bhuctwa swergalocam visalam
cshine punye mertyalocam visanti

"These, having through virtue reached the mansion of the king of *sura's*, feast on the exquisite heavenly food of the Gods: they, who have enjoyed this lofty region of SWERGA, *but* whose virtue is exausted, revisit the habitation of mortals."

INDRA, therefore, or the *King* of Immortals, corresponds with one of the ancient *Jupiters* (for

several of that name were worshipped in *Europe*), and particularly with *Jupiter* the *Conductor*, whose attributes are so nobly described by the *Platonic* Philosophers: one of his numerous titles is *Dyupeti*; or, in the nominative case before certain letters, *Dyupetir* which means the *Lord of Heaven*, and seems a more probable origin of the *Hetruscan* word than *Juvans Pater*; as *Diespiter* was, probably, not the *Father*, but the *Lord*, of *Day*. He may be considered as the JOVE of ENNIUS in his memorable line:

'Aspice hoc sublime candens, quem invocant omnes *Jovem*,' where the poet clearly means the firmament, of which INDRA is the personification. He is the God of thunder and the five elements, with inferior Genii under his command; and is conceived to govern the Eastern quarter of the world, but to preside, like the *Genius* or *Agathodæmon* of the Ancients, over the celestial bands, which are stationed on the summit of MERU, or the Northpole, where he solaces the Gods with nectar and heavenly music: hence, perhaps, the *Hindus*, who give evidence, and the magistrates, who hear it, are directed to stand fronting the East or the North.

This imaginary mount is here feigned to have been seen in a vision at *Varanasi*, very improperly called *Banaris*, which takes its name from two rivulets, that embrace the city; and the bard, who was favoured with the sight, is supposed to have been VYASA, surnamed *Dwaipayana*, or *Dwelling in an Island*;

who, if he really composed the *Geita*, makes very flattering mention of himself in the tenth chapter. The plant *Lata*, which he describes weaving a net round the mountain *Mandara*, is transported by a poetical liberty to *Sumeru*, which the great author of the *Mahabharat* has richly painted in four beautiful couplets: it is the generic name for a *creeper*, though represented here as a species, of which many elegant varieties are found in *Asia*.

The Genii named *Cinnara's* are the male dancers in *Swerga*, or the Heaven of INDRA; and the *Apsara's* are his dancing-girls, answering to the *fairies* of the PERSIANS, and to the damsels called in the KORAN *hhuru'luyun*, or *with antelopes' eyes*. For the story of *Chitraratha*, the chief musician of the *Indian* paradise, whose *painted car* was burned by ERJAN, and for that of the *Chaturdesaretna*, or *fourteen gems*, as they are called, which were produced by churning the ocean, the reader must be referred to Mr. WILKINS's learned annotations on his accurate version of the *Bhagavadgita*. The fable of the pomegranate-flower is borrowed from the popular mythology of *Nepal* and *Tibet*.

In this poem the same form of stanza is repeated with *variations*, on a principle entirely new in modern lyric poetry, which on some future occasion may be fully explained.

THE HYMN.

BUT ah! what glories yon blue vault emblaze?
What living meteors from the zenith stream?
Or hath a rapt'rous dream
Perplex'd the isle-born bard in fiction's maze?
He wakes; he hears; views no fancied rays.
'Tis INDRA mounted on the sun's bright beam;
And round him revels his empyreal train:
How rich their tints! how sweet their strain!
Like shooting stars around his regal seat
A veil of many-colour'd light they weave,
That eyes unholy would of sense bereave:
Their sparkling hands and lightly-tripping feet
Tir'd gales and panting clouds behind them leave.
With love of song and sacred beauty smit
The mystic dance they kint;
Pursuing, circling, whirling, twining, leading,
Now chasing, now receding;
Till the gay pageant from the sky descends
On charm'd *Sumeru*, who with homage bends.
Hail, mountain of delight,
Palace of glory, bless'd by glory's king!
With prosp'ring shade embow'r me, whilst I sing
Thy wonders yet unreach'd by mortal flight.

Sky-piercing mountain! In thy bow'rs of love
No tears are seen, save where medici'nal stalks
Weep drops balsamic o'er the silver'd walks;
No plaints are heard, save where the restless dove
Of coy repulse and mild reluctance talks;
Mantled in woven gold, with gems enchas'd,
With em'rald hillocks grac'd,
From whose fresh laps in young fantastic mazes
Soft crystal bounds and blazes
Bathing the lithe convolvulus, that winds
Obsequious, and each flaunting arbour binds.
When sapient BRAHMA this new world approv'd,
On woody wings eight primal mountains mov'd;
But INDRA mark'd *Sumeru* for his own,
And motionless was ev'ry stone.
Dazzling the moon he rears his golden head:
Nor bards inspir'd, nor heav'n's all-perfect speech
Less may unhallow'd rhyme his beauties teach,
Or paint the pavement which th' immortals tread;
Nor thought of man his awful height can reach:
Who sees it, maddens; who approaches, dies;
For, with flame-darting eyes,
Around it roll a thousand sleepless dragons;
While from their diamond flagons
The feasting Gods exhaustless nectar sip,
Which glows and sparkles on each fragrant lip.
This feast, in mem'ry of the churned wave
Great INDRA gave, when *Amrit* first was won
From impious demons, who to *Maya's* eyes
Resign'd the prize, and rued the fight begun.

Now, while each ardent *Cinnara* persuades
The soft-ey'd *Apsara* to break the dance,
And leads her loth, yet with love-beaming glance,
To banks of marjoram and *Champac* shades,
Celestial *Genii* tow'rd their king advance
(So call'd by men, in heav'n *Gandharva's* nam'd)
For matchless music fam'd.
Soon, where the bands in lucid rows assemble,
Flutes breathe, and citherns tremble;
Till CHITRARATHA sings—His painted car,
Yet unconsum'd, gleams like an orient star.

Hush'd was ev'ry breezy pinion,
Ev'ry stream his fall suspended:
Silence reign'd; whose sole dominion
Soon was rais'd, but soon was ended.

He sings, how 'whilom from the troubled main
The sov'reign elephant *Airavan* sprang;
The breathing shell, that peals of conquest rang;
The parent cow, whom none implores in vain;
The milkwhite steed, the bow with deaf'ning clang;
The Goddesses of beauty, wealth, and wine;
Flow'rs, that unfading shine,
NARAYAN'S gem, the moonlight's tender languish;
Blue venom, source of anguish;
The solemn leech, slow-moving o'er the strand,
A vase of long-sought *Amrit* in his hand.

To soften human ills dread SIVA drank
The pois'nous flood, that stain'd his azure neck;
The rest thy mansions deck,
High *Swerga*, stor'd in many a blazing rank.

Thou, God of thunder, satst on *Meru* thron'd,
Cloud-riding, mountain-piercing, thousand-ey'd,
With young PULOMAJA, thy blooming bride,
Whilst air and skies thy boundless empire own'd;
Hail, DYUPETIR, dismay to BALA's pride!
Or speaks PURANDER best thy martial fame,
Or SACRA, mystic name?
With various praise in odes and hallow'd story
Sweet bards shall hymn thy glory.
Thou, VASAVA, from this unmeasur'd height
Shedst pearl, shedst odours o'er the sons of light!'

The Genius rested; for his pow'rful art
Had swell'd the monarch's heart with ardour vain,
That threaten'd rash disdain, and seem'd to low'r
On Gods of loftier pow'r and ampler reign.

He smil'd; and, warbling in a softer mode,
Sang 'the red light'ning hail, and whelming rain
O'er *Gocul* green and *Vraja's* nymph-lov'd plain
By INDRA hurl'd, whose altars ne'er had glow'd,
Since infant CRISHNA rul'd the rustic train
Now thrill'd with terrour—Them the heav'nly child
Call'd, and with looks ambrosial smil'd,
Then with one finger rear'd the vast *Goverdhen*,
Beneath whose rocky burden
On pastures dry the maids and herdsmen trod:
The Lord of thunder felt a mightier God!'

What furies potent modulation soothes!
E'en the dilated heart of INDRA shrinks:
His ruffled brow he smoothes,
His lance half-rais'd with listless languor sinks.

A sweeter strain the sage musician chose:
He told, how 'SACHI, soft as morning light,
Blythe SACHI, from her Lord INDRANI hight,
When through clear skies their car ethereal rose,
Fix'd on a garden trim her wand'ring sight,
Where gay pomegranates, fresh with early dew,
Vaunted their blossoms new:
'Oh! pluck,' she said, 'yon gems, which nature dresses
To grace my darker tresses.'
In form a shepherd's boy, a God in soul,
'He hasten'd, and the bloomy treasure stole.
The reckless peasant, who those glowing flow'rs,
Hopeful of rubied fruit, had foster'd long,
Seiz'd and with cordage strong
Shackled the God, who gave him show'rs.
Straight from sev'n winds immortal Genii flew,
Green *Varuna*, whom foamy waves obey,
Bright *Vahnu* flaming like the lamp of day,
Cuvera sought by all, enjoyed by few,
Marut, who bids the winged breezes play,
Stern *Yama*, ruthless judge, and *Isa* cold
With *Nairrit* mildly bold:
They with the ruddy flash, that points his thunder,
Rend his vain bands asunder.
Th' exulting God resumes his thousand eyes,
Four arms divine, and robes of changing dyes.'
Soft memory retrac'd the youthful scene:
The thund'rer yielded to resistless charms,
Then smil'd enamour'd on his blushing queen,
And melted in her arms.

Such was the vision, which, on *Varun's* breast
Or *Asi* pure with offer'd blossoms fill'd,
DWAIPAYAN slumb'ring saw; (this NARED will'd)
For waking eye such glory never bless'd,
Nor waking ear such music ever thrill'd.
It vanish'd with light sleep: he, rising, prais'd
The guarded mount high-raised,
And pray'd the thund'ring pow'r, that sheafy treasures,
Mild show'rs and vernal pleasures,
The lab'ring youth in mead and vale might cheer,
And cherish'd herdsmen bless th' abundant year.

Thee, darter of the swift blue bolt, he sang;
Sprinkler of genial dews and fruitful rains
O'er hills and thirsty plains!
'When through the waves of war thy charger sprang,
Each rock rebellow'd and each forest rang,
Till vanquish'd *Asurs* felt avenging pains.
Send o'er their seats the snake, that never dies,
But waft the virtuous to thy skies!'

A HYMN

TO

SURYA.

THE ARGUMENT.

A PLAUSIBLE opinion has been entertained by learned men, that the principal source of idolatry among the ancients was their enthusiastic admiration of the Sun; and that, when the primitive religion of mankind was lost amid the distractions of establishing regal government, or neglected amid the allurements of vice, they ascribed to the great visible luminary, or to the wonderful fluid, of which it is the general reservoir, those powers of pervading all space and animating all nature, which their wiser ancestors had attributed to one eternal MIND, by whom the substance of fire had been created as an inanimate and secondary cause of natural phenomena. The Mythology of the East confirms this opinion; and it is probable, that the *triple Divinity* of the *Hindus* was originally no more than a personification of the Sun, whom they call *Treyitenu*, or *Three-bodied*, in his triple capacity of producing forms by his genial *heat*, preserving them by his *light*, or destroying them by the concentrated force

of his *igneous* matter: this, with the wilder conceit of a *female power* united with the Godhead, and ruling nature by his authority, will account for nearly the whole system of *Egyptian*, *Indian*, and *Grecian* polytheism, distinguished from the sublime Theology of the Philosophers, whose understandings were too strong to admit the popular belief, but whose influence was too weak to reform it.

SURYA, PHŒBUS of *European* heathens, has near fifty names or epithets in the *Sanscrit* language; most of which, or at least the meanings of them, are introduced in the following Ode; and every image, that seemed capable of poetical ornament, has been selected from books of the highest authority among the *Hindus*: the title *Arca* is very singular; and it is remarkable, that the *Tibetians* represent the Sun's car in the form of a *boat*.

It will be necessary to explain a few other particulars of the *Hindu* Mythology, to which allusions are made in the poem. SOMA, or the Moon, is a *male* Deity in the *Indian* system, as *Mona* was, I believe, among the *Saxons*, and *Lunus* among some of the nations, who settled in *Italy*: his titles also, with one or two of the ancient fables, to which they refer, are exhibited in the second stanza. Most of the *Lunar mansions* are believed to be the daughters of *Casyapa*, the first production of *Brahma's* head, and from their names are derived those of the twelve months, who are here feigned to have married as many constellations: this primeval

Brahmen and *Vinata* are also supposed to have been the parents of *Arun*, the charioteer of the Sun, and of the bird *Garuda*, the eagle of the great *Indian* JOVE, one of whose epithets is *Madhava*.

After this explanation the Hymn will have few or no difficulties, especially if the reader has perused and studied the *Bhagavadgita*, with which our literature has been lately enriched, and the fine episode from the *Mahabharat*, on the production of the *Amrita*, which seems to be almost wholly astronomical, but abounds with poetical beauties. Let the following description of the demon *Rahu*, decapitated by *Narayan*, be compared with similar passages in *Hesiod* and *Milton*:

tach ch'hailasringapratiman danavasya siro mahat
chacrach'hinnam c'hamutpatya nenaditi bhayancaram,
tat cabandham pepatasya visp'hurad dharanitale
sapervatavanadwipan daityasyacampayaumahim.

THE HYMN.

FOUNTAIN of living light,
That o'er all nature streams,
Of this vast microcosm both nerve and soul;
Whose swift and subtil beams,
Eluding mortal sight,
Pervade, attract, sustain th' effulgent whole,
Unite, impel, dilate, calcine,
Give to gold its weight and blaze,
Dart from the diamond many-tinted rays,
Condense, protrude, transform, concoct, refine
The sparkling daughters of the mine;
Lord of the lotos, father, friend, and king,
O Sun, thy pow'rs I sing:
Thy substance *Indra* with his heav'nly bands
Nor sings nor understands;
Nor e'en the *Vedas* three to man explain
Thy mysticorb triform, though *Brehma* tun'd the strain.
Thou, nectar-beaming Moon,
Regent of dewy night,
From yon black roe, that in thy bosom sleeps,
Fawn-spotted *Sasin* hight;
Wilt thou desert so soon
Thy night-flow'rs pale, whom liquid odour steeps,
And *Oshadhi's* transcendent beam
Burning in the darkest glade?
Will no lov'd name thy gentle mind persuade

Yet one short hour to shed thy cooling stream?
But ah! we court a passing dream:
Our pray'r nor *Indu* nor *Himansu* hears;
He fades; he disappears—
E'en *Casyapa's* gay daughters twinkling die,
And silence lulls the sky,
Till *Chatacs* twitter from the moving brake,
And sandal-breathing gales on beds of ether wake.
Burst into song, ye spheres;
A greater light proclaim,
And hymn, concentric orbs, with sev'nfold chime
The God with many a name;
Nor let unhallow'd ears
Drink life and rapture from your charm sublime:
'Our bosoms, *Aryama* inspire,
Gem of heav'n, and flow'r of day,
Vivaswat, lancer of the golden ray,
Divacara, pure source of holy fire,
Victorious *Rama's* fervid fire,
Dread child of *Aditi*, *Martanda* bless'd,
Or *Sura* be address'd,
Ravi, or *Mihira*, or *Bhanu* bold,
Or *Arca*, title old,
Or *Heridaswa* drawn by green-hair'd steeds,
Or *Carmasacshi* keen, attesting secret deeds.
What fiend, what monster fierce
E'er durst thy throne invade?
Malignant *Rahu*. Him thy wakeful sight,
That could the deepest shade
Of snaky *Naraс* pierce,

Mark'd quaffing nectar; when by magic sleight
A *Sura's* lovely form he wore,
Rob'd in light, with lotos crown'd,
What time th' immortals peerless treasures found
On the churn'd Ocean's gem-bespangled shore,
And *Mandar's* load the tortoise bore:
Thy voice reveal'd the daring sacrilege;
Then, by the deathful edge
Of bright *Sudersan* cleft, his dragon head
Dismay and horror spread
Kicking the skies, and struggling to impair
The radiance of thy robes, and stain thy golden hair.
With smiles of stern disdain
Thou, sov'reign victor, seest
His impious rage: soon from the mad assault
Thy coursers fly releas'd;
Then toss each verdant mane,
And gallop o'er the smooth aerial vault;
Whilst in charm'd *Gocul's* od'rous vale
Blue-ey'd *Yamuna* descends
Exulting, and her tripping tide suspends,
The triumph of her mighty sire to hail:
So must they fall, who Gods assail!
For now the demon rues his rash emprise,
Yet, bello'wing blasphemies
With pois'nous throat, for horrid vengeance thirsts,
And oft with tempest bursts,
As oft repell'd he groans in fiery chains,
And o'er the realms of day unvanquish'd *Surya* reigns.'
Ye clouds, in wavy wreathes

Your dusky van unfold;
O'er dimpled sands, ye surges, gently flow,
With sapphires edg'd and gold!
Loose-tressed morning breathes,
And spreads her blushes with expansive glow;
But chiefly where heav'n's op'ning eye
Sparkles at her saffron gate,
How rich, how regal in his orient state!
Erelong he shall imblaze th' unbounded sky:
The fiends of darkness yelling fly;
While birds of liveliest note and lightest wing
The rising daystar sing,
Who skirts th' horizon with a blazing line
Of topazes divine;
E'en, in their prelude, brighter and more bright,
Flames the red east, and pours insufferable light.*
First o'er blue hills appear,
With many an agate hoof
And pasterns fring'd with pearl, sev'n coursers green;
Nor boasts yon arched woof
That girds the show'ry sphere,
Such heav'n-spun threads of colour'd light serene,
As tinge the reins, which *Arun* guides,
Glowing with immortal grace,
Young *Arun*, loveliest of *Vinatian* race,
Though younger He, whom *Madhava* bestrides,
When high on eagle-plumes he rides:
But oh! what pencil of a living star
Could paint that gorgeous car,

* See GRAY's Letters, p. 382, 4to. and the note.

In which, as in an ark supremely bright,
The lord of boundless light
Ascending calm o'er th' empyrean sails,
And with ten thousand beams his awful beauty veils.
Behind the glowing wheels
Six jocund seasons dance,
A radiant month in each quick-shifting hand;
Alternate they advance,
While buxom nature feels
The grateful changes of the frolic band:
Each month a constellation fair
Knit in youthful wedlock holds,
And o'er each bed a varied sun unfolds,
Lest one vast blaze our visual force impair,
A canopy of woven air.
Vasanta blythe with many a laughing flow'r
Decks his *Candarpa's* bow'r;
The drooping pastures thirsty *Grishma* dries,
Till *Versha* bids them rise;
Then *Sarat* with full sheaves the champaign fills,
Which *Sisira* bedews, and stern *Hemanta* chills.
Mark, how th' all-kindling orb
Meridian glory gains!
Round *Meru's* breathing zone he winds oblique
O'er pure cerulean plains:
His jealous flames absorb
All meaner lights, and unresisted strike
The world with rapt'rous joy and dread.
Ocean, smit with melting pain,
Shrinks, and the fiercest monster of the main

Mantles in caves profound his tusky head
With sea-weeds dank and coral spread:
Less can mild earth and her green daughters bear
The noon's wide-wasting glare;
To rocks the panther creeps; to woody night
The vulture steals his flight;
E'en cold cameleons pant in thickets dun,
And o'er the burning grit th' unwinged locusts run!

But when thy foaming steeds
Descend with rapid pace
Thy fervent axle hast'ning to allay,
What majesty, what grace
Dart o'er the western meads
From thy relenting eye their blended ray!

Soon may th' undazzled sense behold
Rich as *Vishnu's* diadem,
Or *Amrit* sparkling in an azure gem,
Thy horizontal globe of molten gold,
Which pearl'd and rubied clouds infold.

It sinks; and myriads of diffusive dyes
Stream o'er the tissued skies,
Till *Soma* smiles, attracted by the song
Of many a plumed throng
In groves, meads, vales; and, whilst he glides above,
Each bush and dancing bough quaffs harmony and love.

Then roves thy poet free,
Who with no borrow'd art
Dares hymn thy pow'r, and durst provoke thy blaze,
But felt thy thrilling dart;

And now, on lowly knee,
From him, who gave the wound, the balsam prays.
Herbs, that assuage the fever's pain,
Scatter from thy rolling car,
Cull'd by sage *Aswin* and divine *Cumar;*
And, if they ask, "What mortal pours the strain?"
Say (for thou seest earth, air, and main)
Say: "From the bosom of yon silver isle,
Where skies more softly smile,
He came; and, lisping our celestial tongue,
Though not from *Brehma* sprung,
Draws orient knowledge from its fountains pure,
Through caves obstructed long, and paths too long
obscure."]
Yes; though the *Sanscrit* song
Be strown with fancy's wreathes,
And emblems rich, beyond low thoughts refin'd,
Yet heav'nly truth it breathes
With attestation strong,
That, loftier than thy sphere, th' Eternal Mind,
Unmov'd unrival'd undefil'd,
Reigns with providence benign:
He still'd the rude abyss, and bade it shine
(While Sapience with approving aspect mild
Saw the stupendous work, and smil'd);
Next thee, his flaming minister, bade rise
O'er young and wondering skies.
Since thou, great orb, with all-enlight'ning ray
Rulest the golden day,
How far more glorious He, who said serene,
Be, and *thou wast*—Himself unform'd, unchang'd,
unseen!]

A HYMN

TO

LACSHMI.

THE ARGUMENT.

MOST of the allusions to *Indian* Geography and Mythology, which occur in the following Ode to the Goddess of Abundance have been explained on former occasions; and the rest are sufficiently clear. LACSHMI or SRI, the CERES of *India*, is the *preserving power* of nature, or, in the language of allegory, the consort of VISHNU or HERI, a personification of the divine goodness; and her origin is variously deduced in the several *purana's*, as we might expect from a system wholly figurative and emblematical. Some represent her as the daughter of BHRIGU, a son of BREHMA; but, in the *Marcandeya Puran*, the *Indian* ISIS, or *Nature*, is said to have assumed three transcendent forms, according to her three *guna's* or *qualities*, and, in each of them, to have produced a pair of divinities, BREHMA and LACSHMI, MAHESA and SERESWATI, VISHNU and CALI; after whose intermarriage, BREHMA and SERESWATI formed the mundane Egg, which MAHESA and CALI divided into halves; and VISHNU together with LACSHMI

preserved it from destruction: a third story supposes her to have sprung from the *Sea of milk*, when it was churned on the second incarnation of HERI, who is often painted reclining on the serpent ANANTA, the emblem of eternity: and this fable, whatever may be the meaning of it, has been chosen as the most poetical. The other names of SRI, or *Prosperity*, are HERIPRIYA, or PEDMALAYA, or PEDMA and CAMALA: the first implying the wife of VISHNU, and the rest derived from the names of the Lotos. As to the tale of SUDAMAN, whose wealth is proverbial among the *Indus*, it is related at considerable length in the *Bhagavat*, or great *puran* on the Achievements of CRISHNA: the *Brahmen*, who read it with me, was frequently stopped by his tears. We may be inclined perhaps to think, that the wild fables of idolaters are not worth knowing, and that we may be satisfied with mispending our time in learning the Pagan Theology of old *Greece* and *Rome*; but we must consider, that the allegories contained in the Hymn to LACSHMI constitute at this moment the prevailing religion of a most extensive and celebrated Empire, and are devoutly believed by many millions, whose industry adds to the revenue of *Britain*, and whose manners, which are interwoven with their religious opinions, nearly affect all *Europeans*, who reside among them.

THE HYMN

DAUGHTER of Ocean and primeval Night,
Who, fed with moonbeams dropping silver dew,
And cradled in a wild wave dancing light,
Saw'st with a smile new shores and creatures new,
Thee, Goddess, I salute; thy gifts I sing,
And, not with idle wing,
Soar from this fragrant bow'r through tepid skies,
Ere yet the steeds of noon's effulgent king
Shake their green manes and blaze with rubied eyes:
Hence, floating o'er the smooth expense of day,
Thy bounties I survey,
See through man's oval realm thy charms display'd,
See clouds, air, earth, performing thy behest,
Plains by soft show'rs, thy tripping handmaids, dress'd,
And fruitful woods, in gold and gems array'd,
Spangling the mingled shade;
While autumn boon his yellow ensign rears,
And stores the world's true wealth in rip'ning ears.
But most that central tract thy smile adorns,
Which old *Himala* clips with fost'ring arms,
As with a wexing moon's half-circling horns,
And shields from bandits fell, or worse alarms
Of *Tatar* horse from *Yunan* late subdued,
Or *Bactrian* bowmen rude;

Snow-crown'd *Himala*, whence, with wavy wings
Far spread, as falcons o'er their nestlings brood,
Fam'd *Brahmaputra* joy and verdure brings,
And *Sindhu's* five-arm'd flood from *Cashghar* hastes,
To cheer the rocky wastes,
Through western this and that through orient plains;
While bluish *Yamuna* between them streams,
And *Ganga* pure with sunny radiance gleams,
Till *Vani*, whom a russet ochre stains,
Their destin'd confluence gains:

Then flows in mazy knot the triple pow'r
O'er laughing *Magadh* and the vales of *Gour*.
Not long inswath'd the sacred infant lay
(Celestial forms full soon their prime attain):
Her eyes, oft darted o'er the liquid way,
With golden light emblaz'd the darkling main;
And those firm breasts, whence all our comforts well,
Rose with enchanting swell;

Her loose hair with the bounding billows play'd,
And caught in charming toils each pearly shell,
That idling through the surgy forest stray'd;
When ocean suffer'd a portentous change,
Toss'd with convulsion strange;

For lofty *Mandar* from his base was torn,
With streams, rocks, woods, by Gods and Demons whirl'd,]
While round his craggy sides the mad spray curl'd,
Hugh mountain, by the passive Tortoise borne:
Then sole, but not forlorn,

Shipp'd in a flow'r, that balmy sweets exhal'd,
O'er waves of dulcet cream PEDMALA sail'd.
So name the Goddess from her Lotos blue,
Or CAMALA, if more auspicious deem'd:
With many-petal'd wings the blossom flew,
And from the mount a flutt'ring sea-bird seem'd,
Till on the shore it stopp'd, the heav'n-lov'd shore,
Bright with unvalued store

Of gems marine by mirthful INDRA won;
But she, (what brighter gem had shone before?)
No bride for old MARICHA's frolic son,
On azure HERI fix'd her prosp'ring eyes:
Love bade the bridegroom rise;

Straight o'er the deep, then dimpling smooth, he rush'd;
And tow'rd th' unmeasur'd snake, stupendous bed,
The world's great mother, not reluctant, led:
All nature glow'd, whene'er she smil'd or blush'd,
The king of serpents hush'd

His thousand heads, where diamond mirrors blaz'd,
That multiplied her image, as he gaz'd.
Thus multiplied, thus wedded, they pervade,
In varying myriads of ethereal forms,
This pendent Egg by dovelike MAYA laid,
And quell MAHESA's ire, when most it storms;
Ride on keen lightning and disarm its flash,
Or bid loud surges lash

Th' impassive rock, and leave the rolling barque
With oars unshatter'd milder seas to dash;
And oft, as man's unnumber'd woes they mark,

They spring to birth in some high-favour'd line,
Half human, half divine,
And tread life's maze transfigur'd, unimpair'd :
As when, through blest *Vrindavan's* od'rous grove,
They deign'd with hinds and village girls to rove,
And myrth or toil in field or dairy shar'd,
As lowly rustics far'd :

Blythe RADHA she, with speaking eyes, was nam'd,
He CRISHNA, lov'd in youth, in manhood fam'd.
Though long in *Mathura* with milkmaids bred,
Each bush attuning with his past'ral flute,
ANANDA'S holy steers the Herdsman fed,
His nobler mind aspir'd to nobler fruit :
The fiercest monsters of each brake or wood
His youthful arm withstood,

And from the rank mire of the stagnant lake
Drew the crush'd serpent with ensanguin'd hood ;
Then, worse than rav'ning beast or fenny snake,
A ruthless king his pond'rous mace laid low,
And heav'n approv'd the blow :
No more in bow'r or wattled cabin pent,
By rills he scorn'd and flow'ry banks to dwell,
His pipe lay tuneless, and his wreathy shell
With martial clangor hills and forests rent ;
On crimson wars intent
He sway'd high *Dwaraca*, that fronts the mouth
Of gulfy *Sindhu* from the burning south.
A Brahmen young, who, when the heav'nly boy
In *Vraja* green and scented *Gocul* play'd,

Partook each transient care, each flitting joy,
And hand in hand through dale or thicket stray'd,
By fortune sever'd from the blissful seat,
Had sought a lone retreat;
Where in a costless hut sad hours he pass'd,
Its mean thatch pervious to the daystar's heat,
And fenceless from night's dew or pinching blast:
Firm virtue he possess'd and vig'rous health,
But they were all his wealth.
SUDAMAN was he nam'd; and many a year
(If glowing song can life and honour give)
From sun to sun his honour'd name shall live:
Oft strove his consort wise their gloom to cheer,
And hide the stealing tear;

But all her thrift could scarce each eve afford
The needful sprinkling of their scanty board.
Now Fame, who rides on sunbeams, and conveys
To woods and antres deep her spreading gleam,
Illumin'd earth and heav'n with CRISHNA'S praise:
Each forest echoed loud the joyous theme,
But keener joy SUDAMAN'S bosom thrill'd,
And tears ecstatic rill'd:

"My friend," he cried, "is monarch of the skies!"
Then counsell'd she, who nought unseemly will'd:
"Oh! haste; oh! seek the God with lotos eyes;
The pow'r that stoops to soften human pain,
Though bashful penury his hope depress'd;
A tatter'd cincture was his only vest,
And o'er his weaker shoulder loosely spread
Floated the mystic thread:

Secure from scorn the crowded paths he trode
Through yielding ranks, and hail'd the Shepherd God.
" Friend of my childhood, lov'd in riper age,
A dearer guest these mansions never grac'd :
O meek in social hours, in council sage !"
So spake the Warriour, and his neck embrac'd ;
And e'en the Goddess left her golden seat
Her lord's compeer to greet :

He charm'd, but prostrate on the hallow'd floor,
Their purfled vestment kiss'd and radiant feet ;
Then from a small fresh leaf, a borrow'd store
(Such off'rings e'en to mortal kings are due)
Of modest rice he drew.

Some proffer'd grains the soft-ey'd Hero ate,
And more had eaten, but, with placid mien,
Bright RUCMINI (thus name th' all-bounteous Queen)
Exclaim'd: " Ah, hold! enough for mortal state !"
Then grave on themes elate

Discoursing, or on past adventures gay,
They clos'd with converse mild the rapt'rous day.
At smile of dawn dismiss'd, ungifted, home
The hermit plodded, till sublimely rais'd
On granite columns many a sumptuous dome
He view'd, and many a spire, that richly blaz'd,
And seem'd, impurpled by the blush of morn,
The lowlier plains to scorn

Imperious: they, with conscious worth serene,
Laugh'd at vain pride, and bade new gems adorn
Each rising shrub, that clad them. Lovely scene

And more than human! His astonish'd sight
Drank deep the strange delight:
He saw brisk fountains dance, crisp riv'lets wind
O'er borders trim, and round inwoven bow'rs,
Where sportive creepers, threading ruby flow'rs
On em'rald stalks, each vernal arch intwin'd,
Luxuriant though confin'd;
And heard sweet-breathing gales in whispers tell
From what young bloom they sipp'd their spicy smell.
Soon from the palace-gate in broad array
A maiden legion, touching tuneful strings,
Descending strow'd with flow'rs the brighten'd way,
And straight, their jocund van in equal wings
Unfolding, in their vacant centre show'd
Their chief, whose vesture glow'd
With carbuncles and smiling pearls atween;
And o'er her head a veil translucent flow'd,
Which, dropping light, disclos'd a beauteous queen,
Who, breathing love, and swift with timid grace,
Sprang to her lord's embrace
With ardent greeting and sweet blandishment;
His were the marble tow'rs, th' officious train,
The gems unequal'd and the large domain:
When bursting joy its rapid stream had spent,
The stores, which heav'n had lent,
He spread unsparing, unattach'd employ'd,
With meekness view'd, with temp'rate bliss enjoy'd
Such were thy gifts, PEDMALA, such the pow'r!
For, when thy smile irradiates yon blue fields,
Observant INDRA sheds the genial show'r,
And pregnant earth her springing tribute yields

Of spiry blades, that clothe the champaign dank,
Or skirt the verd'rous bank,
That in th' o'erflowing rill allays his thirst:
Then, rising gay in many a waving rank,
The stalks redundant into laughter burst;
The rivers broad, like busy should'ring bands,
Clap their applauding hands;
The marish dances and the forest sings;
The vaunting trees their bloomy banners rear;
And shouting hills proclaim th' abundant year,
That food to herds, to herdsmen plenty brings,
And wealth to guardian kings.
Shall man unthankful riot on thy stores?
Ah, no! he bends, he blesses, he adores.
But, when his vices rank thy frown excite,
Excessive show'rs the plains and valleys drench,
Or warping insects heath and coppice blight,
Or drought unceasing, which no streams can quench,
The germin shrivels or contracts the shoot,
Or burns the wasted root:
Then fade the groves with gather'd crust imbrown'd,
The hills lie gasping, and the woods are mute,
Low sink the riv'lets from the yawning ground;
Till Famine gaunt her screaming pack lets slip,
And shakes her scorpion whip;
Dire forms of death spread havock, as she flies,
Pain at her skirts and Mis'ry by her side,
And jabb'ring spectres o'er her traces glide;
The mother clasps her babe, with livid eyes,
Then, faintly shrieking, dies:

He drops expiring, or but lives to feel
The vultures bick'ring for their horrid meal.
From ills, that, painted, harrow up the breast,
(What agonies, if real, must they give !)
Preserve thy vot'ries : be their labours blest !
Oh ! bid the patient *Hindu* rise and live.
His erring mind, that wizard lore beguiles
Clouded by priestly wiles,
To senseless nature bows for nature's GOD.
Now, stretch'd o'er ocean's vast from happier isles,
He sees the wand of empire, not the rod :
Ah, may those beams, that western skies illume,
Disperse th' unholy gloom !
Meanwhile may laws, by myriads long rever'd,
Their strife appease, their gentler claims decide ;
So shall their victors, mild with virtuous pride,
To many a cherish'd grateful race endear'd,
With temper'd love be fear'd :
Though mists profane obscure their narrow ken,
They err, yet feel ; though pagans, they are men.

A HYMN

TO

NARAYENA.

THE ARGUMENT.

A COMPLETE introduction to the following Ode would be no less than a full comment on the VAYDS and PURANS of the HINDUS, the remains of *Egyptian* and *Persian* Theology, and the tenets of the *Ionic* and *Italic* Schools; but this is not the place for so vast a disquisition. It will be sufficient here to premise, that the inextricable difficulties attending the *vulgar notion* of *material substances*, concerning which

"We know this only, that we nothing know,"

induced many of the wisest among the Ancients, and some of the most enlightened among the Moderns, to believe, that the whole Creation was rather an *energy* than a *work*, by which the Infinite Being, who is present at all times in all places, exhibits to the minds of his creatures a set of perceptions, like a wonderful picture or piece of music, always varied, yet always uniform; so that all bodies and their qualities exist, indeed, to every wise and useful purpose,

but exist only as far as they are *perceived;* a theory no less pious than sublime, and as different from any principle of Atheism, as the brightest sunshine differs from the blackest midnight. This *illusive operation* of the Deity the *Hindu* philosophers call MAYA, or *Deception*; and the word occurs in this sense more than once in the commentary on the *Rig Vayd*, by the great VASISHTHA, of which MR. HALHED has given us an admirable specimen.

The *first* stanza of the Hymn represents the sublimest attributes of the Supreme Being, and the three forms, in which they most clearly appear to us, *Power*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, or, in the language of ORPHEUS and his disciples, *Love:* the *second* comprises the *Indian* and *Egyptian* doctrine of the Divine Essence and Archetypal *Ideas;* for a distinct account of which the reader must be referred to a noble description in the sixth book of PLATO's *Republic;* and the fine explanation of that passage in an elegant discourse by the author of CYRUS, from whose learned work a hint has been borrowed for the conclusion of this piece. The *third* and *fourth* are taken from the Institutes of MENU, and the eighteenth *puran* of VYASA, entitled *Srey Bhagawat*, part of which has been translated into *Persian*, not without elegance, but rather too paraphrastically. From BREHME, or the *Great Being*, in the *neuter* gender, is formed BREHMA, in the *masculine;* and the second word is appropriated to the *creative power* of the Divinity.

The spirit of GOD, called NARAYENA, or *moving on the water*, has a multiplicity of other epithets in *Sanscrit*, the principal of which are introduced, expressly or by allusion, in the *fifth* stanza; and two of them contain the names of the *evil beings*, who are feigned to have sprung from the ears of VISHNU; for thus the divine spirit is entitled, when considered as the *preserving power*: the *sixth* ascribes the perception of *secondary* qualities by our *senses* to the immediate influence of MAYA; and the *seventh* imputes to her operation the *primary* qualities of *extension* and *solidity*.

THE HYMN.

SPIRIT of Spirits, who, through ev'ry part
Of space expanded and of endless time,
Beyond the stretch of lab'ring thought sublime,
Badst uproar into beauteous order start,
Before Heav'n was, Thou art;
Ere spheres beneath us roll'd or spheres above,
Ere earth in firmamental ether hung,
Thou satst alone; till, through thy mystic Love,
Things unexisting to existence sprung,
And grateful descant sung.
What first impell'd thee to exert thy might?
Goodness unlimited. What glorious light
Thy pow'r directed? Wisdom without bound.
What prov'd it first? Oh! guide my fancy right;
Oh! raise from combrous ground
My soul in rapture drown'd,
That fearless it may soar on wings of fire;
For Thou, who only knowst, Thou only canst inspire.
Wrapt in eternal solitary shade,
Th' impenetrable gloom of light intense,
Impervious, inaccessible, immense,
Ere spirits were infus'd or forms display'd,
BREHMA his own Mind survey'd,
As mortal eyes (thus finite we compare
With infinite) in smoothest mirrors gaze:

Swift, at his look, a shape supremely fair
Leap'd into being with a boundless blaze,
That fifty suns might daze.
Primeval MAYA was the Goddess nam'd,
Who to her sire, with Love divine inflam'd,
A casket gave with rich *Ideas* fill'd,
From which this gorgeous Universe he fram'd;
For, when th' Almighty will'd
Unnumber'd worlds to build,
From Unity diversified he sprang,
While gay Creation laugh'd, and procreant Nature rang.
First an all-potent all-pervading sound
Bade flow the waters——and the waters flow'd,
Exulting in their measureless abode,
Diffusive, multitudinous, profound,
Above, beneath, around;
Then o'er the vast expanse primordial wind
Breath'd gently, till a lucid bubble rose,
Which grew in perfect shape an Egg refin'd:
Created substance no such lustre shows,
Earth no such beauty knows.
Above the warring waves it danc'd elate,
Till from its bursting shell with lovely state
A form cerulean flutter'd o'er the deep,
Brightest of beings, greatest of the great:
Who, not as mortals steep,
Their eyes in dewy sleep,
But heav'nly-pensive on the Lotos lay,
That blossom'd at his touch and shed a golden ray

Hail, primal blossom ! hail empyreal gem !
KEMEL, or PEDMA, or whate'er high name
Delight thee, say, what four-form'd Godhead came,
With graceful stole and beamy diadem,
Forth from thy verdant stem ?
Full-gifted BREMA ! Rapt in solemn thought
He stood, and round his eyes fire-darting threw ;
But, whilst his viewless origin he sought,
One plain he saw of living waters blue,
Their spring nor saw nor knew.
Then, in his parent stalk again retir'd,
With restless pain for ages he inquir'd
What were his pow'rs, by whom, and why conferr'd:
With doubts perplex'd, with keen impatience fir'd
He rose, and rising heard
Th' unknown all-knowing Word,
"BREHMA ! no more in vain research persist :
My veil thou canst not move—Go ; bid all worlds exist."
Hail, self-existent, in celestial speech
NARAYEN, from thy wat'ry cradle, nam'd ;
Or VENAMALY may I sing unblam'd,
With flow'ry braids, that to thy sandals reach,
Whose beauties, who can teach ?
Or high PEITAMBER clad in yellow robes
Than sunbeams brighter in meridian glow,
That weave their heav'n-spun light o'er circling globes ?]
Unwearied, lotos-eyed, with dreadful bow,
Dire Evil's constant foe !
Great PEDMANABHA, o'er thy cherish'd world
The pointed *Checra*, by thy fingers whirl'd,

Fierce KYTABH shall destroy and MEDHU grim
To black despair and deep destruction hurl'd.
Such views my senses dim,
My eyes in darkness swim:

What eye can bear thy blaze, what utt'rance tell
Thy deeds with silver trump or many-wreathed shell?
Omniscient Spirit, whose all-ruling pow'r
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam;
Glows in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,
Smiles in the bud, and glistens in the flow'r;
That crowns each vernal bow'r;

Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat
Of ev'ry bird, that hails the bloomy spring,
Or tells his love in many a liquid note,
Whilst envious artists touch the rival string,
Till rocks and forests ring;

Breathes in rich fragrance from the sandal grove,
Or where the precious musk-deer playful rove;
In dulcet juice from clust'ring fruit distills,
And burns salubrious in the tasteful clove:
Soft banks and verd'rous hills
Thy present influence fills;

In air, in floods, in caverns, woods, and plains;
Thy will inspirits all, thy sov'reign MAYA reigns.
Blue crystal vault, and elemental fires,
That in th' ethereal fluid blaze and breathe;
Thou, tossing main, whose snaky branches wreathe
This pensile orb with intertwisted gyres;
Mountains, whose radiant spires

Presumptuous rear their summits to the skies,
And blend their em'rald hue with sapphire light;
Smooth meads and lawns, that glow with varying dyes]
Of dew-bespangled leaves and blossoms bright,
Hence! vanish from my sight:
Delusive Pictures! unsubstantial shows!
My soul absorb'd One only Being knows,
Of all perceptions One abundant source,
Whence ev'ry object ev'ry moment flows:
Suns hence derive their force,
Hence planets learn their course;
But suns and fading worlds I view no more:
GOD only I perceive; GOD only I adore.

A HYMN
TO
SERESWATY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE *Hindu* Goddesses are uniformly represented as the subordinate *powers* of their respective lords: thus LACSHMI, the consort of VISHNU the *Preserver*, is the Goddess of *abundance* and *prosperity;* BHABANI, the wife of MAHADEV, is the genial power of *fecundity;* and SERESWATY, whose husband was the *Creator* BREHMA, possesses the powers of Imagination and Invention, which may justly be termed *creative.* She is, therefore, adored as the patroness of the fine arts, especially of Music and Rhetoric, as the inventress of the SANSCRIT Language, of the *Devanagry* Letters, and of the sciences, which writing perpetuates; so that her attributes correspond with those of MINERVA MUSICA, in *Greece* and *Italy*, who invented the flute, and presided over literature. In this character she is addressed in the following ode, and particularly as the *Goddess of Harmony;* since the *Indians* usually paint her with a musical instrument in her hand: the seven notes, an artful combination of which constitutes *Music* and variously affects the passions, are feigned to be her earliest production; and the greatest part of the Hymn exhibits a correct delineation of the RAGMALA,

or *Necklace* of *Musical Modes*, which may be considered as the most pleasing invention of the ancient *Hindus*, and the most beautiful union of Painting with poetical Mythology and the genuine theory of Music.

The different position of the *two* semitones in the scale of *seven* notes gives birth to seven *primary* modes ; and, as the whole series consists of *twelve* semitones, every one of which may be made a *modal* note or *tonic*, there are in nature, (though not universally in practice) *seventy-seven* other modes, which may be called *derivative :* all the *eighty-four* are distributed by the PERSIANS, under the notion of *locality*, into three classes consisting of *twelve* rooms, *twenty-four* angles, and *forty-eight* recesses ; but the HINDU arrangement is elegantly formed on the variations of the *Indian* year, and the association of ideas ; a powerful auxiliary to the ordinary effect of modulation. The Modes, in this system, are deified ; and, as there are *six* seasons in *India*, namely, two Springs, Summer, Autumn, and two Winters, an original RAG, or *God of the Mode*, is conceived to preside over a particular season ; each principal mode is attended by *five** RAGNYS, or *Nymphs of Harmony;* each has *eight* Sons, or *Genii* of the same divine Art ; and each RAG, with his family, is appropriated to a distinct season, in which alone his melody can be sung or played at prescribed hours of the day and night : the mode of DEIPEC, or CUPID the *Inflamer*, is supposed to be lost ; and a tradition is

* It is generally known that each RAG is attended by *six* Ragnys. P. P. E.

current in *Hindustan*, that a musician, who attempted to restore it, was consumed by fire from heaven. The natural distribution of modes would have been *seven*, *thirty-three*, and *forty-four*, according to the number of the *minor* and *major* secondary tones; but this order was varied for the sake of the charming fiction above-mentioned. NARED, who is described in the *third* stanza, was one of the first created beings, corresponding with the MERCURY of the *Italians*, inventor of the VENE, a fretted instrument supported by two large *gourds*, and confessedly the finest used in *Asia*.

A full discussion of so copious a subject would require a separate dissertation; but here it will be sufficient to say, that almost every allusion and every epithet in the Poem, as well as the names, are selected from approved treatises, either originally *Persian* or translated from the *Sanscrit*, which contain as lively a display of genius, as human imagination ever exhibited.

The last couplet alludes to the celebrated place of pilgrimage, at the confluence of the *Ganga* and *Yamuna*, which the *Sereswaty*, another sacred river, is supposed to join under ground.

THE HYMN.

SWEET grace of BREHMA's bed!
Thou, when thy glorious lord
Bade airy nothing breathe and bless his pow'r,
Satst with illumin'd head,
And, in sublime accord,
Sev'n sprightly notes, to hail th' auspicious hour,
Ledst from their secret bow'r:
They drank the air; they came
With many a sparkling glance,
And knit the mazy dance,
Like yon bright orbs, that gird the solar flame,
Now parted, now combin'd,
Clear as thy speech and various as thy mind.
Young Passions at the sound
In shadowy forms arose,
O'er hearts, yet uncreated, sure to reign;
Joy, that o'erleaps all bound,
Grief, that in silence grows,
Hope, that with honey blends the cup of pain,
Pale Fear, and stern Disdain,
Grim Wrath's avenging band,
Love, nurs'd in dimple smooth,
That ev'ry pang can soothe;
But, when soft Pity her meek trembling hand
Stretch'd, like a new-born girl,
Each sigh was music, and each tear a pearl.

Thee her great parent owns
All-ruling Eloquence,
That, like full GANGA, pours her stream divine
Alarming states and thrones:
To fix the flying sense
Of words, thy daughters, by the varied line
(Stupendous art!) was Thine;
Thine, with pointed reed
To give primeval Truth
Th' unfading bloom of youth,
And paint on deathless leaves high Virtue's meed:
Fair Science, heav'n-born child,
And playful Fancy on thy bosom smil'd.
Who bids the fretted *Vene*
Start from his deep repose,
And wakes to melody the quiv'ring frame?
What youth with goldlike mien
O'er his bright shoulder throws
The verdant gourd, that swells with struggling flame?
NARED, immortal name!
He, like his potent Sire,
Creative spreads around
The mighty world of sound,
And calls from speaking wood ethereal fire;
While to th' accordant strings
Of boundless heav'ns and heav'nly deeds he sings.
But look! the jocund hours
A lovelier scene display,
Young HINDOL sportive in his golden swing
High-canopied with flow'rs;
While *Ragny's* ever gay

Toss the light cordage, and in cadence sing
The sweet return of Spring:
Here dark *Virawer* stands;
There *Ramcary* divine
And fawn-eyed *Lelit* shine;

But stern *Daysasha* leads her warring bands,
And slow in ebon clouds
Petmenjary her fading beauty shrouds.
Ah! where has DEIPEC veil'd
His flame-encircled head?

Where flow his lays too sweet for mortal ears?
O loss how long bewail'd!
Is yellow *Camod* fled?
And blythe *Carnaty* vaunting o'er her peers?
Where stream *Caydar's* tears
Intent on scenes above,
A beauteous anchorite?
No more shall *Daysa* bright

With gentle numbers call her tardy love?
Has *Netta*, martial maid,
Lock'd in sad slumbers her sky-temper'd blade?
Once, when the vernal noon
Blaz'd with resistless glare,

The Sun's eye sparkled, and a God was born:
He smil'd; but vanish'd soon——
Then groan'd the northern air;
The clouds, in thunder mutt'ring sullen scorn,
Delug'd the thirsty corn.
But, earth-born artist, hold!

If e'er thy soaring lyre
To *Deipec's* notes aspire,
Thy strings, thy bow'r, thy breast with rapture bold,
Red lightning shall consume ;
Nor can thy sweetest song avert the doom.
See sky-form'd MAYGH descend
In fertilising rain,
Whilst in his hand a falchion gleams unsheath'd !
Soft nymphs his car attend,
And raise the golden grain,
Their tresses dank with dusky spikenard wreath'd :
(A sweeter gale ne'er breath'd)
Tenca with laughing eyes,
And *Gujry's* bloomy cheek,
Mellar with dimple sleek,
On whose fair front two musky crescents rise :
While *Dayscar* his rich neck
And mild *Bhopaly* with fresh jasmin deck.
Is that the King of Dread
With ashy musing face,
From whose moon-silver'd locks fam'd GANGA springs ?
'Tis BHAIRAN, whose gay bed
Five blushing damsels grace,
And rouse old Autumn with immortal strings,
Till ev'ry forest rings ;
Bengaly lotos-crown'd,
Vairaty like the morn,
Sindvy with looks of scorn,
And *Bhairavy*, her brow with *Champa's* bound ;

But *Medhumadha's* eyes
Speak love, and from her breast pomegranates rise.
Sing loud, ye lucid spheres;
Ye gales, more briskly play,
And wake with harmony the drooping meads:
The cooler season cheers
Each bird, that panting lay,
And SIRV bland his dancing bevy leads
Hymning celestial deeds:
Marva with robes like fire,
Vasant whose hair perfumes
With musk its rich-eyed plumes,
Asavery, whom list'ning asps admire,
Dhenasry, flow'r of glades,
And *Malsry*, whom the branching *Amra* shades.
MALCAUS apart reclines
Bedeck'd with heav'n-strung pearls,
Blue-mantled, wanton, drunk with youthful pride;
Nor with vain love repines,
While softly-smiling girls
Melt on his cheek or frolic by his side,
And wintry winds deride;
Shambhawty leads along
Cocabh with kerchief rent,
And *Gaury* wine-besprent,
Warm *Guncary*, and *Toda* sweet in song,
Whom antelopes surround
With smooth tall necks, and quaff the streaming sound.
Nor deem these nuptial joys
With lovely fruit unblest:
No; from each God an equal race proceeds,

From each eight blooming boys ;
Who, their high birth confess'd,
With infant lips gave breath to living reeds
In valleys, groves and meads :
Mark how they bound and glance !
Some climb the vocal trees,
Some catch the sighing breeze,
Some, like new stars, with twinkling sandals dance ;
Some the young *Shamma* snare,
Some warble wild, and some the burden bear.
These are thy wond'rous arts ;
Queen of the flowing speech,
Thence SERESWATY nam'd and VANY bright !
Oh, joy of mortal hearts,
Thy mystic wisdom teach ;
Expand thy leaves, and, with ethereal light,
Spangle the veil of night.
If LEPIT please thee more,
Or BRAHMY, awful name,
Dread BRAHMY'S aid we claim,
And thirst, VACDEVY, for thy balmy lore
Drawn from that rubied cave,
Where meek-ey'd pilgrims hail the triple wave.

A HYMN
TO
GANGA.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS poem would be rather obscure without geographical notes; but a short introductory explanation will supply the place of them, and give less interruption to the reader.

We are obliged to a late illustrious *Chinese* monarch named CAN-HI, who directed an accurate survey to be made of *Potyid* or (as it is called by the *Arabs*) *Tebbut*, for our knowledge, that a chain of mountains nearly parallel with *Imaus*, and called *Cantese* by the *Tartars*, forms a line of separation between the sources of two vast rivers; which, as we have abundant reason to believe, run at first in opposite directions, and, having finished a winding circuit of two thousand miles, meet a little below *Dhaca*, so as to inclose the richest and most beautiful peninsula on earth, in which the BRITISH nation, after a prosperous course of brilliant actions in peace and war, have now the principal sway. These rivers are *deified* in INDIA; that, which rises on the *Western* edge of the mountain, being considered as the daughter of MAHADEVA or SIVA, and the other as the son of BREHMA: their loves, wanderings, and nuptials are the chief subject of the following Ode, which is feigned to have been the work of a BRAHMEN, in an

early age of HINDU antiquity, who, by a prophetical spirit, discerns the toleration and equity of the BRITISH government, and concludes with a prayer *for its peaceful duration under good laws well administered.*

After a general description of the *Ganges*, an account is given of her fabulous birth, like that of *Pallas*, from the forehead of *Siva*, the *Jupiter Tonans* and *Genitor* of the *Latins*; and the creation of her lover by an act of *Brehma's* will is the subject of another stanza, in which his course is delineated through the country of *Potyid*, by the name of *Sanpo*, or *Supreme Bliss*, where he passes near the fortress of *Rimbu*, the island of *Palte* or *Yambro* (known to be the seat of a high priestess almost equally venerated with the Goddess *Bhawani*) and *Trashilhumbo* (as a *Potya* or *Tebbutian* would pronounce it), or the sacred mansion of the *Lama* next in dignity to that of *Potala*, who resides in a city, to the south of the *Sanpo*, which the *Italian* travelers write *Sgigatzhe*, but which, according to the letters, ought rather to be written in a manner, that would appear still more barbarous in our orthography. The *Brahmaputra* is not mentioned again till the *twelfth* stanza, where his progress is traced, by very probable conjecture, through *Rangamati*, the ancient *Rangamritica* or *Rangamar*, celebrated for the finest spikenard, and *Srihat* or *Siret*, the *Serratæ* of *Elian*, whence the fragrant essence extracted from the *Malobathrum*, called *Sadah* by the

Persians, and *Tejapatra* by the *Indians*, was carried by the *Persian* gulf to *Syria*, and from that coast into *Greece* and *Italy*. It is not, however, positively certain, that the *Brahmaputra* rises as it is here described: two great geographers are decidedly of opposite opinions on this very point; nor is it impossible that the *Indian* river may be one arm of the *Sanpo* and the *Naucyan*, another; diverging from the mountains of *Asham*, after they have been enriched by many rivers from the rocks of *China*.

The *fourth* and *fifth* stanzas represent the Goddess obstructed in her passage to the west by the hills of *Emodi*, so called from a *Sanscrit* word signifying *snow*, from which also are derived both *Imaus* and *Himalaya* or *Himola*. The *sixth* describes her, after her entrance into *Hindustan* through the straits of *Cupala*, flowing near *Sambal*, the *Sambalaca* of *Ptolemy*, famed for a beautiful plant of the like name, and thence to the once opulent city and royal place of residence, *Canyacuvja*, erroneously named *Calinipaxa* by the *Greeks*, and *Canauj*, not very accurately, by the modern *Asiatics*: here she is joined by the *Calinadi*, and pursues her course to *Prayaga*, whence the people of *Bahar* were named *Prasii*, and where the *Yamuna*, having received the *Sereswaty* below *Indraprestha* or *Delhi*, and watered the poetical ground of *Mathura* and *Agra*, mingles her noble stream with the *Ganga* close to the modern fort of *Allahabad*. This place is considered as the confluence of *three* sacred rivers, and known

by the name of *Triveni*, or the *three plaited locks;* from which a number of pilgrims, who there begin the ceremonies to be completed at *Gaya*, are continually bringing vases of water, which they preserve with superstitious veneration, and are greeted by all the *Hindus*, who meet them on their return.

Six of the principal rivers, which bring their tribute to the *Ganges*, are next enumerated, and are succinctly described from real properties: thus the *Gandac*, which the *Greeks* knew by a similar name, abounds, according to *Giorgi*, with *crocodiles* of enormous magnitude; and the *Mahanadi* runs by the plain of *Gaura*, once a populous district with a magnificent capital, from which the *Bengalese* were probably called *Gangaridæ*, but now the seat of desolation, and the haunt of wild beasts. From *Prayaga* she hastens to *Casi*, or as the *Musulmans* name it, *Benares;* and here occasion is taken to condemn the cruel and intolerant spirit of the crafty tyrant AURANGZIB, whom the *Hindus* of *Cashmir* call *Aurangasur*, or the *Demon*, not the *Ornament*, of the *Throne*. She next bathes the skirts of *Patali-putra*, changed into *Patna*, which, both in situation and name, agrees better on the whole with the ancient *Palibothra*, than either *Prayaga*, or *Canyacubja*: if *Megasthenes* and the ambassadors of *Seleucus* visited the last-named city, and called it *Palibothra*, they were palpably mistaken. After this are introduced the beautiful hill of *Muctigiri*, or *Mengir*, and the wonderful pool of *Sita*, which takes its

name from the wife of *Rama*, whose conquest of *Sinhaldwip*, or *Ceylon*, and victory over the giant *Rawan*, are celebrated by the immortal *Valmici*, and by other epic poets of *India*.

The pleasant hills of *Caligram* and *Ganga-presad* are then introduced, and give occasion to deplore and extol the late excellent AUGUSTUS CLEVLAND, ESQ. who nearly completed by lenity the glorious work, which severity could not have accomplished, of civilizing a ferocious race of *Indians*, whose mountains were formerly, perhaps, a rocky island, or washed at least by that sea, from which the fertile champaign of *Bengal* has been gained in a course of ages. The western arm of the *Ganges* is called *Bhagirathi*, from a poetical fable of a demigod or holy man, named *Bhagiratha*, whose devotion had obtained from *Siva* the privilege of leading after him a great part of the heavenly water, and who drew it accordingly in two branches; which embrace the fine island, now denominated from *Kasimbazar*, and famed for the defeat of the monster *Sirajuddaulah*, and, having met near the venerable *Hindu* seminary of *Nawadwip* or *Nediya*, flow in a copious stream by the several *European* settlements, and reach the Bay at an island which assumes the name of *Sagar*, either from the *Sea* or from an ancient Raja of distinguished piety. The *Sundarabans* or *Beautiful Woods*, an appellation to which they are justly entitled, are incidentally mentioned, as lying between the *Bhagirathi* and the *Great River*, or *Eastern* arm, which,

THE HYMN.

HOW sweetly GANGA smiles, and glides
Luxuriant o'er her broad autumnal bed!
Her waves perpetual verdure spread,
Whilst health and plenty deck her golden sides:
As when an eagle, child of light,
On *Cambala's* unmeasur'd height,
By *Potala*, the pontiff's throne rever'd,
O'er her eyry proudly rear'd
Sits brooding, and her plumage vast expands,
Thus GANGA o'er her cherish'd lands,
To *Brehma's* grateful race endear'd,
Throws wide her fost'ring arms, and on her banks divine]
Sees temples, groves, and glitt'ring tow'rs, that in her crystal shine.]

Above the stretch of mortal ken,
On bless'd *Cailasa's* top, where ev'ry stem
Glow'd with a vegetable gem,
MAHESA stood, the dread and joy of men;
While *Parvati*, to gain a boon,
Fix'd on his locks a beamy moon,
And hid his frontal eye, in jocund play,
With reluctant sweet delay:
All nature straight was lock'd in dim eclipse
Till *Brahmens* pure, with hallow'd lips
And warbled pray'rs restor'd the day;

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When GANGA from his brow by heav'nly fingers press'd]
Sprang radiant, and descending grac'd the caverns of the west.]
The sun's car blaz'd, and laugh'd the morn;
What time near proud *Cantesa's* eastern bow'rs,
(While *Devata's* rain'd living flow'rs)
A river-god, so *Brehma* will'd, was born,
And roll'd mature his vivid stream
Impetuous with celestial gleam:
The charms of GANGA, through all worlds proclaim'd,
Soon his youthful breast inflam'd,
But destiny the bridal hour delay'd;
Then, distant from the west'ring maid,
He flow'd, now blissful *Sanpo* nam'd,
By *Palte* crown'd with hills, bold *Rimbu's* tow'ring state,]
And where sage *Trashilhumbo* hails her *Lama's* form renate.]
But she, whose mind, at *Siva's* nod,
The picture of that sov'reign youth had seen,
With graceful port and warlike mien,
In arms and vesture like his parent God,
Smit with the bright idea rush'd,
And from her sacred mansion gush'd,
Yet ah! with erring step—The western hills
Pride, not pious ardour, fills:
In fierce confed'racy the giant bands
Advance with venom-darting hands,
Fed by their own malignant rills;
Nor could her placid grace their savage fury quell:
The madding rifts and should'ring crags her foamy flood repell.]

" Confusion wild and anxious wo
Haunt your waste brow, she said, unholy rocks,
Far from these nectar-dropping locks!
But thou, lov'd Father, teach my waves to flow."
Loud thunder her high birth confess'd;
Then from th' inhospitable west
She turn'd, and, gliding o'er a lovelier plain,
Cheer'd the pearled East again:
Through groves of nard she roll'd, o'er spicy reeds,
Through golden vales and em'rald meads;
Till, pleas'd with INDRA's fair domain,
She won through yielding marl her heav'n-directed way:
With lengthen'd notes her eddies curl'd, and pour'd
a blaze of day.]
Smoothly by *Sambal's* flaunting bow'rs,
Smoothly she flows, where *Calinadi* brings
To *Canyacuvja*, seat of kings,
On prostrate waves her tributary flow'rs;
Whilst *Yamuna*, whose waters clear
Fam'd *Indraprestha's* vallies cheer,
With *Sereswaty* knit in mystic chain,
Gurgles o'er the vocal plain
Of *Mathura*, by sweet *Brindavan's* grove,
Where *Gopa's* love-lorn daughters rove,
And hurls her azure stream amain,
Till blest *Prayaga's* point beholds three mingling tides,
Where pilgrims on the far-sought bank drink nectar,
as it glides.]
From *Himola's* perennial snow,
And southern *Palamau's* less daring steep,
Sonorous rivers, bright though deep,

O'er thirsty deserts youth and freshness throw.
'A goddess comes,' cried *Gumti* chaste,
And roll'd her flood with zealous haste:
Her follow'd *Sona* with pellucid wave
Dancing from her diamond cave,
Broad *Gogra*, rushing swift from northern hills,
Red *Gandac*, drawn by crocodiles,
(Herds, drink not there, nor, herdsmen, lave!)
Cosa, whose bounteous hand *Nepalian* odour flings,
And *Mahanadi* laughing wild at cities, thrones, and kings.]

Thy temples, CASI, next she sought,
And verd'rous plains by tepid breezes fann'd,
Where health extends her pinions bland,
Thy groves, were pious *Valmic* sat and thought,
Where *Vyasa* pour'd the strain sublime,
That laughs at all-consuming time,
And *Brahmens* rapt the lofty *Veda* sing.
Cease, oh! cease—a ruffian king,
The demon of his empire, not the grace,
His ruthless bandits bids deface
The shrines, whence gifts ethereal spring:
So shall his frantic sons with discord rend his throne,
And his fair-smiling realms be sway'd by nations yet unknown.]

Less hallow'd scenes her course prolong;
But *Cama*, restless pow'r, forbids delay:
To love all virtues homage pay,
E'en stern religion yields. How full, how strong
Her trembling panting surges run,
where *Patali's* immortal son

To domes and turrets gives his awful name
Fragrant in the gales of fame!
Nor stop, were RAMA, bright from dire alarms,
Sinks in chaste *Sita's* constant arms,
While bards his wars and truth proclaim:
There from a fiery cave the bubbling crystal flows,
And *Muctigir*, delightful hill, with mirth and beauty glows.]

Oh! rising bow'rs great *Calis* boast,
And thou, from *Ganga* nam'd, enchanting mount,
What voice your wailings can recount
Borne by shrill echoes o'er each howling coast,
When He, who bade your forests bloom,
Shall seal his eyes in iron gloom?
Exalted youth! The godless mountaineer,
Roaming round his thickets drear,
Whom rigour fir'd, nor legions could appall,
I see before thy mildness fall,
Thy wisdom love, thy justice fear:
A race, whom rapine nurs'd, whom gory murder stains,]
Thy fair example wins to peace, to gentle virtue trains.

But mark, where old *Bhagirath* leads
(This boon his pray'rs of *Mahadev* obtain:
Grace more distinguish'd who could gain?)
Here calmer current o'er his western meads,
Which trips the fertile plains along,
Where vengeance waits th' oppressor's wrong;
Then girds, fair *Nawadwip*, thy shaded cells,
Where the *Pendit* musing dwells;
Thence by th' abode of arts and commerce glides,
Till *Sagar* breasts the bitter tides:

While She, whom struggling passion swells,
Beyond the labyrinth green, where pards by moonlight prowl,]
With rapture seeks her destin'd lord, and pours her mighty soul.]
Meanwhile o'er *Potyid's* musky dales,
Gay *Rangamar*, where sweetest spikenard blooms,
And *Siret*, fam'd for strong perfumes,
That, flung from shining tresses, lull the gales,
Wild *Brahmaputra* winding flows,
And murmurs hoars his am'rous woes;
Then, charming GANGA seen, the heav'nly boy
Rushes with tumultuous joy:
(Can aught but Love to men or Gods be sweet?)
When she, the long-lost youth to greet,
Darts, not as earth-born lovers toy,
But blending her fierce waves, and teeming verdant isles;]
While buxom *Lacshmi* crowns their bed, and sounding ocean smiles.]
What name, sweet bride, will best allure
Thy sacred ear, and give thee honour due?
Vishnupedi? Mild *Bhishmasu*?
Smooth *Suranimnaga*? *Trisrota* pure?
By that I call? Its pow'r confess;
With growing gifts thy suppliants bless,
Who with full sails in many a light-oar'd boat
On thy jasper bosom float;
Nor frown, dread Goddess, on a peerless race
With lib'ral heart and martial grace,
Wasted from colder isles remote:
As they preserve our laws, and bid our terror cease,
So be their darling laws preserv'd in wealth, in joy, in peace!]